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CONTENTS

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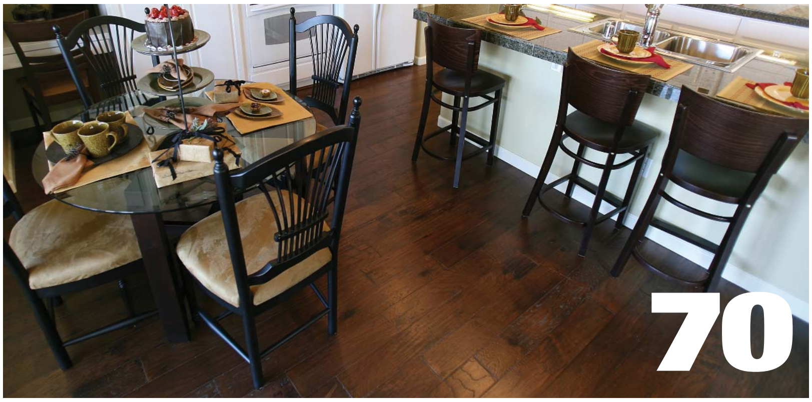

FEATURES

34 **Kit-Built Log Homes**
Here's What to Consider Before you Build

50 **Better Built-in**
Converting a Closet to Cabinets

60 **Highlights from the Builder's Show**
A Roundup of Tools and Materials shown in Orlando

70 **Build a Squeak-Free Floor**
A Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts:
View the Floor Framing as a Total System

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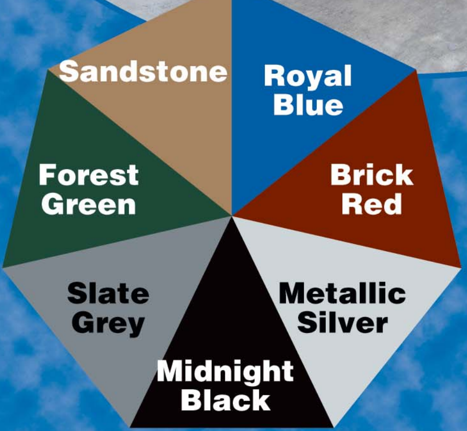
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CONTENTS

EVERY ISSUE

8 **From the Editor**

88 **Advertisers Index**

COLUMNS

10 **Q & A**

14 **Tool School**
Adjustable Pliers & Wrenches

26 **Do-It-Yourself**
Build a Brick Garden Wall

DEPARTMENTS

82 **Everything Auto**
Anti-Sway Bar Install

87 **Hot Products**

14
26
87
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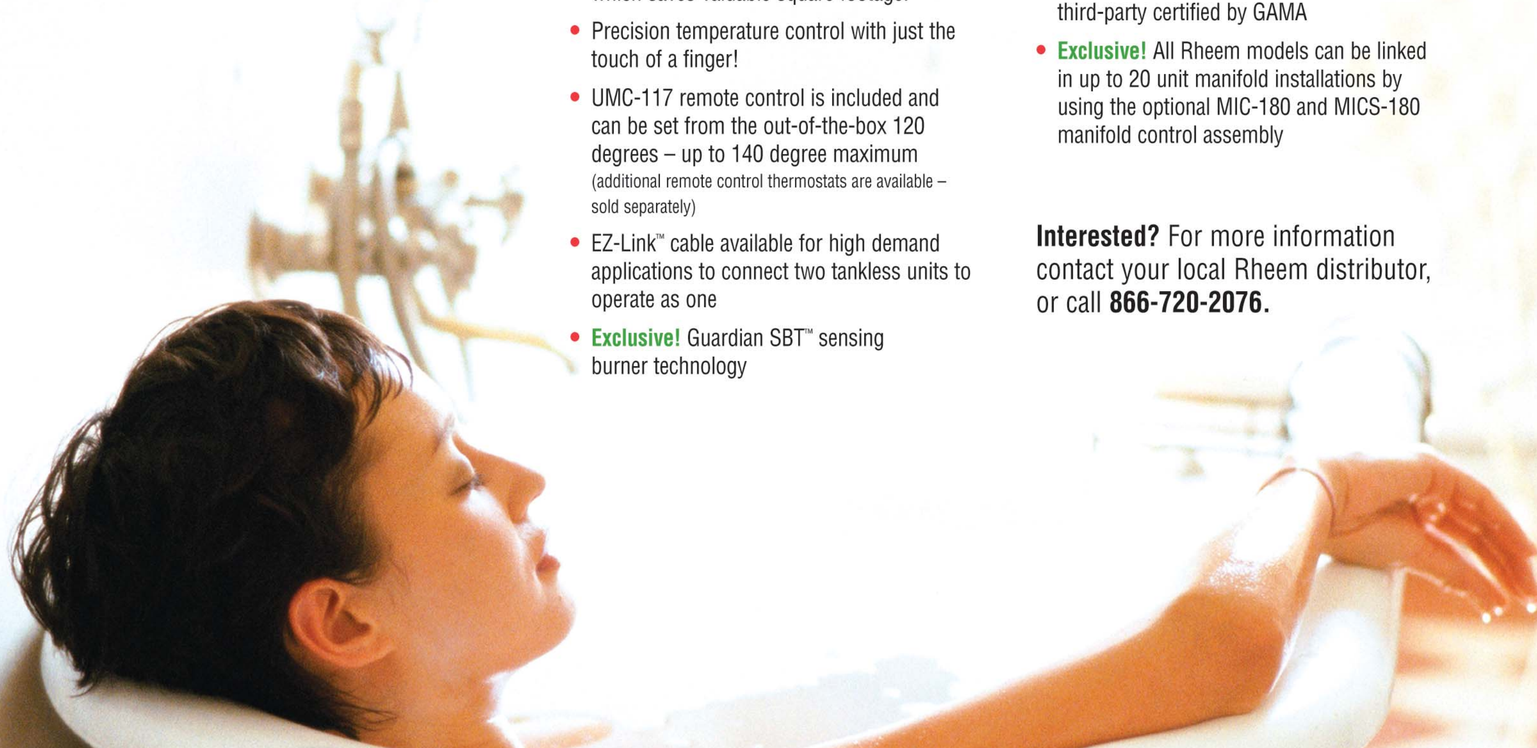

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LETTER
From The Editor-In-Chief

We all have people in our lives that inspire us to get up, get out and go do something. For instance, I knew a guy who had very little formal education, but once built a ski boat by hand without using any plans, other than what he had in his head. When asked if it was seaworthy, he replied, “It’ll do.” So he named the boat, *the Itldoo*. He was an avid fisherman who also renovated a deep-sea boat he would enjoy for years in the Gulf of Mexico, and he taught me how to catch and clean a catfish.

And talk about “how to” … He could make anything with his hands, and years ago built a house to raise his family in West End, Alabama. He preferred working with sheet metal—especially copper. He made big items, like his own metal roofing, a 12-foot roof dormer, decorative street lamps and mailboxes. He also crafted small items such as intricate model replicas of airplanes, locomotives, musical instruments, as well as copper flower baskets for friends and family. One of my favorite pieces was inspired from his time spent in the military: a ceiling fan fashioned to look like the nose of a Corsair airplane from World War II. It looks as if the front of the plane is plunging through the ceiling.

He was also a tireless farmer who for years tended acres of crops, growing everything from turnips, mustard greens, collards, squash and peppers to watermelon, cantaloupe, corn, tomatoes, potatoes and peaches, peaches, peaches… His peach orchard was legendary, at least in his neck of the woods. And he shared his harvest with everyone he met.

And as patient a man as he was, he never wanted to slow down. In fact, he sped up and gained altitude. He was 72 years old when he decided to pursue another interest—flying. He joined the Flying X Glider Airplane Club and became a licensed glider pilot. He loved the peace and quiet of the silent glider soaring like an eagle, and called his pastime “cloud jumping.”

His name is Carl “Buddy” Weber; he was my grandfather and the father of four sons and a daughter. He was married to my grandmother for 64 years. Sadly, he passed away at the end of February at the age of 85. To me, he will always remain a true source of inspiration.

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Extreme How-To is published by
LATITUDE3 MEDIA GROUP, LLC
1111 Edenton Street
Birmingham, AL 35242
Phone 205.949.1600 · Fax 205.949.1601
www.extremehowto.com

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A: Not very. In fact, re-covering a chair seat with fabric is a fairly easy chore. First remove the old seat from the frame. Cut a new piece of foam rubber to the same size as the chair seat. Then cut a square of cotton batting roughly 4 inches larger than the seat in every direction. Cut the same size piece from the new fabric that will cover the seat. To install, first center the foam over the batting on a table. Turn the chair upside-down and place the top of the seat on top of the foam. Stretch the batting tightly over the edges of the seat and staple it along the edges to the underside of the chair seat. Keep the corners neat and flat, and cut away any excess batting. Then, with the chair turned upright, center the new fabric and repeat the stapling procedure along the front, back and sides. Finish by cutting away excess fabric.

……

Q: *I'm about to add new insulation to my attic. I read online that I should use some sort of heat shield around the furnace and water heater flues. How do I make the heat shield?*

A: A heat shield will help reduce air leaks and protect the insulation from high temperatures. The heat shield is essentially aluminum flashing that is cut and bent to fit around the flue. Overlap two flat pieces at the bottom. They should be cut flush to surround the circular base. Press the pieces into a bead of latex caulk and staple them down. Then, form a round collar from the flashing and wrap it around the neck of the flue. Make it a few inches taller than the depth of the insulation. Create a lip at the bottom and top of the collar by cutting tabs and bending them inward or outward as needed, and staple it down.

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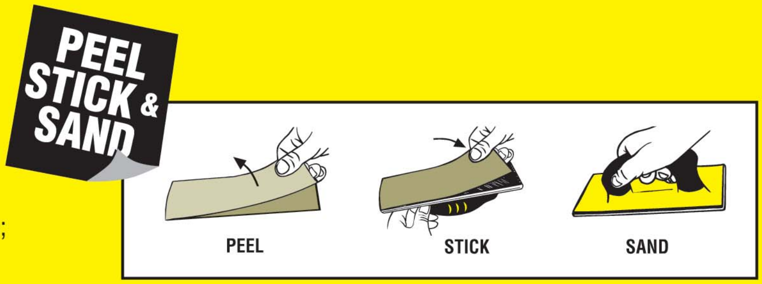
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Q: *Is there a way to replace a single broken tile in a ceramic floor, without having to tear up the whole thing?*

A: You have some extra tiles laying around, right? If not, then you might get lucky finding a replacement piece and matching grout at a tile store. Assuming you have a match, the first step is to remove the damaged tile with a hammer and cold chisel. The trick is to start at the edges and work inward. The tile shards will fly all over the place, so wear eye protection. Remove the old grout with a grout saw. Rotozip makes a special bit for its spiral saw that makes this chore easier than the old hand-tool method. Scrape away the old tile adhesive with a cold chisel so the new tile will lay flat. Use a notched trowel to generously apply thinset mortar to the back of the new floor tile. Place the tile so the grout lines are even, and use a wood block and hammer to gently tap it down so it's flush with the floor. Wipe away extra mortar, and scrape the grout joints clean. After the repair cures for 24 hours, apply grout as with normal tile installation.

……

Q: *Is there any way to fix the leaky faucet on the outside wall next to my flower garden?*

A: A leaky outdoor faucet is probably due to a damaged washer. First step is to turn off the main water supply and unscrew the handle of the faucet. Hold the faucet securely with pliers while using a wrench to loosen the packing nut located behind the handle. With the nut removed, pull out the valve stem. Some stems have to be turned so that a tongue lines up with a groove (if necessary, reattach the handle to turn the stem). At the end of the stem, remove and replace the rubber washer and any rubber O-rings. **EHT**

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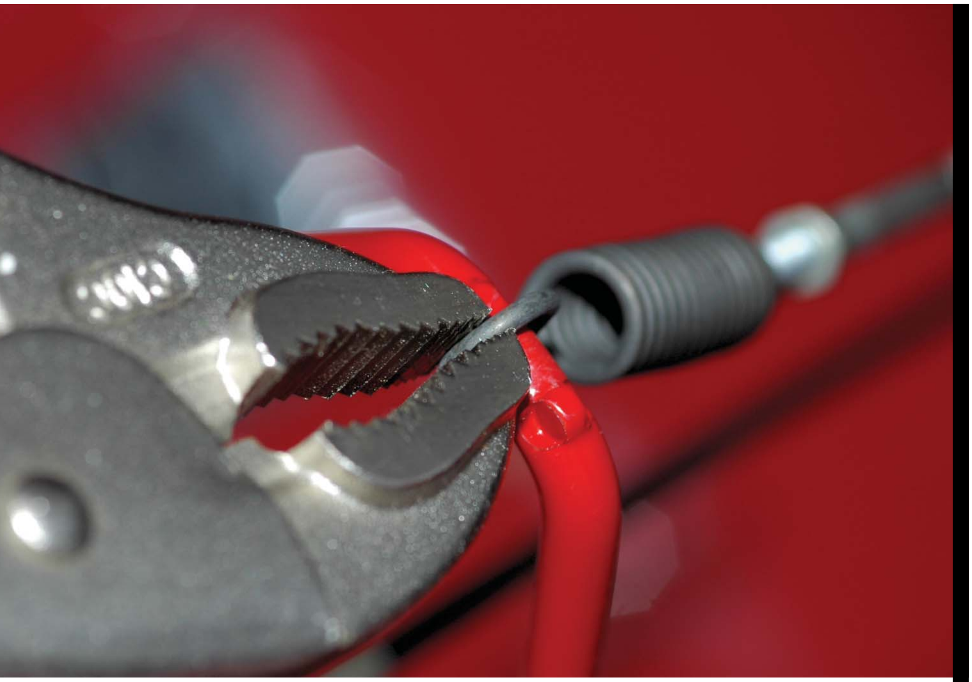


By Matt Weber

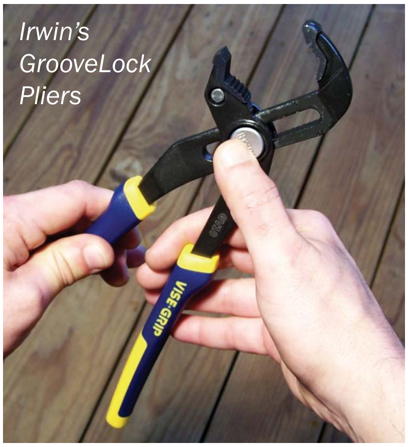
It's a good thing we can depend on pliers and wrenches, otherwise people would have a heck of a time taking things apart and putting them back together. From needle-nose pliers for work in tight spaces to wire cutters and specialized fence-building tools, lever-action pliers presents a broad category for review in a tool column. The same goes for wrenches, which include the standard box-end style to the newer ratcheting wrenches. This article will assume that *EHT* readers know the basics of these tools and instead focus on advances in the design of adjustable pliers and wrenches.

GROOVY

Channeled pliers—also called pump pliers—were invented in 1933 by Howard Manning, chief engineer of Champion-DeArment Tool Company. The tool's tongue-and-groove, slip-joint style adjustability introduced the concept of multiple gripping positions from a single tool, and it proved to be a watershed year for the company. Manning dubbed the pliers "Channellock," and Champion-DeArment immediately applied for trademark protection for the name and for a patent of the concept. By 1963, the word "Channellock" was so synonymous with grooved pliers that the company changed its name to Channellock, Inc. Today, Channellock has more than 4,000 wholesale and retail customers in the United States, and ships to 45 countries around the globe.

The company's latest entry is the 420 tongue-and-groove pliers. Improvements in design include a more substantial head and jaw thickness for better strength and gripping area. The plier's other signature features remain—high carbon, drop-forged steel, laser heat-treated teeth, the patented PermaLock fastener and Channellock Blue comfort grips.

Over the years a variety of manufacturers have introduced grooved pliers that borrow from the Channellock concept. One new enhancement comes from Irwin's GrooveLock pliers. Designed to adjust 50-percent faster than traditional grooved pliers, the GrooveLock tool utilizes a button at the plier hinge, which the user simply presses to unlock the tool and slide the jaws to the appropriate width. Release the button to lock the jaws in place. Once locked, the jaws won't slip out of joint until you press the button again. The multi-groove ratcheting system also has twice the positions of



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traditional channeled pliers. Plus, the "all purpose" jaws are designed to grip flat, round, hex and square work pieces.

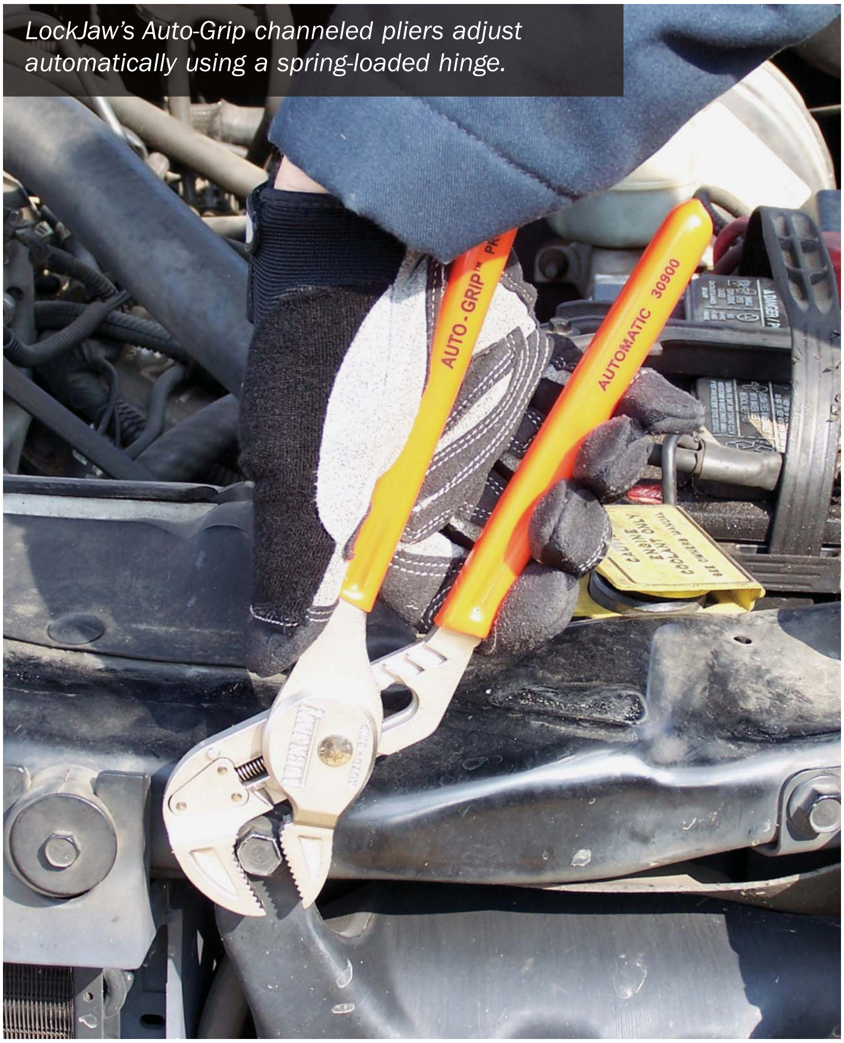
Another new concept comes from LockJaw, which offers fully automatic self-adjusting grooved pliers. There is no adjusting on the part of the user; the pliers do it for you as soon as you grip the workpiece for simple one-handed operation. This is achieved by employing a spring-loaded mechanism in the grooved hinge.

Between the two new concepts, LockJaw wins in the speed-of-adjustment category. However, I prefer the wide, angled jaw design of the Irwin model. And, although there are tons of jobs where LockJaw's self-adjusting model would save time, its hinge design is bulkier and the jaws aren't wide enough to be flush with the side of the hinge. This means that grabbing a short fastener when working adjacent to an obstruction, like turning a nut in the middle of a sheet of plywood, can be a little tougher for the Auto-Grip. But both tools definitely have their advantages.

LOCKING PLIERS

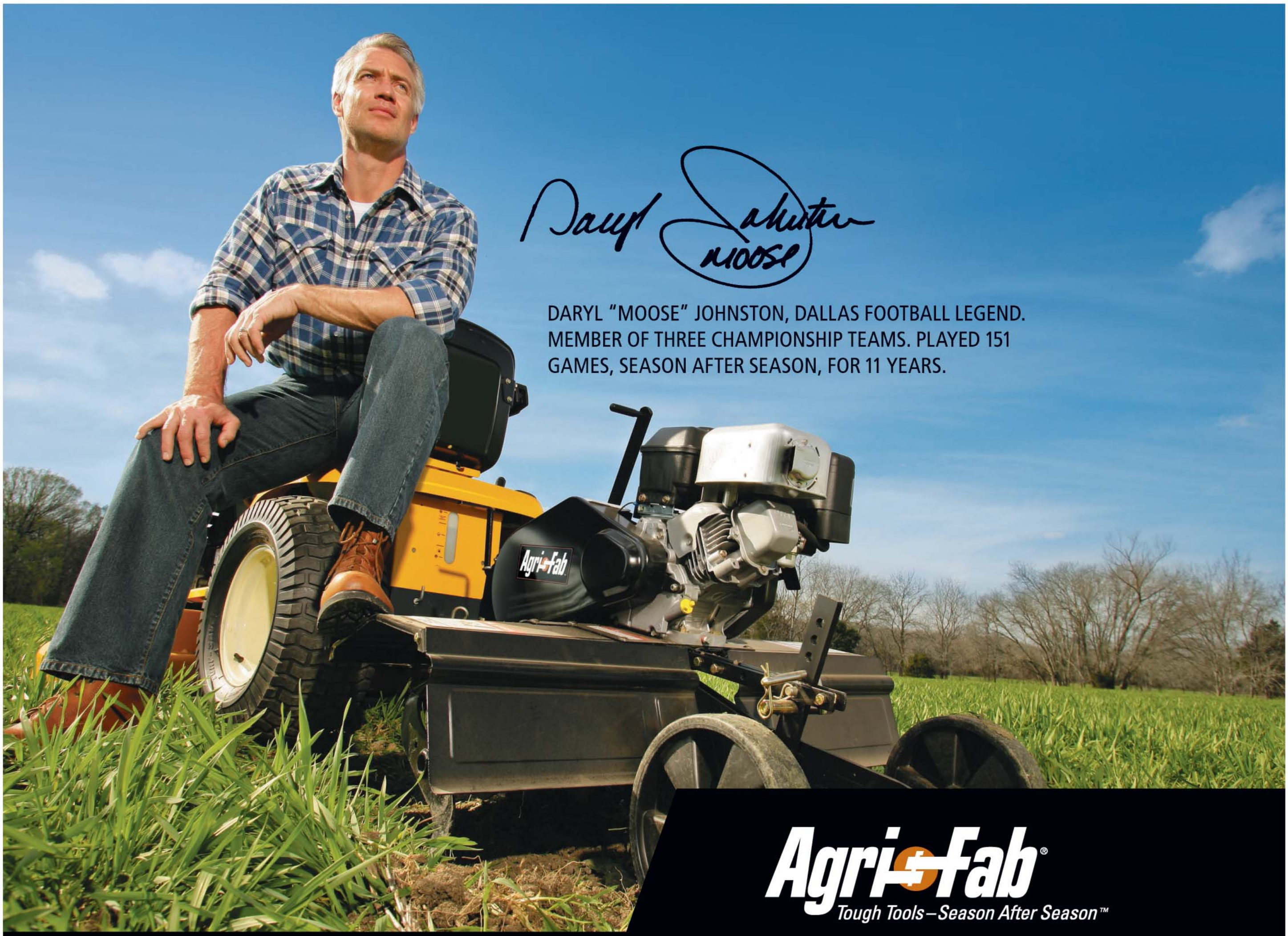
The original locking pliers were invented in the 1920's by a blacksmith named William Petersen. He realized his job would be a lot easier if he had a set of pliers that would clamp down and hold the piece of metal he was working on "in a vise-like grip." Peterson designed a screw mechanism in the handle of pliers that could adjust the opening of the pliers, as well as a device in the second handle to lock it in place. He started selling the Vise-Grip Pliers out of the trunk of his car to farmers and mechanics in the surrounding towns. In the 1950's, the easy release lever was added to the pliers and the company incorporated. The company is now known as Irwin Industrial Tools. Today, Irwin's Vise-Grips come in a variety of styles, some with curved jaws, some with bent noses, others with straight jaws or C-clamps.

Irwin's original Vise-Grip Locking Pliers utilize a knob at the end of the handle to adjust jaw width.



LockJaw's Auto-Grip channeled pliers adjust automatically using a spring-loaded hinge.

Locking pliers are also manufactured by Cooper Hand Tools and LockJaw. The design of the LockJaw Auto-Grip locking pliers puts a new spin on the traditional concept. First, there's the easy-release lever. Although many new models of locking pliers have a quick-release feature, some of these mechanisms actually seem too easy to release. So, if you're as clumsy as I am, you might inadvertently bump the



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pliers, release the lever and have to re-apply the pliers. The LockJaw, model has the lever housed inside the handle, and it requires just enough pressure that I found it less likely to accidentally release. Secondly, the LockJaw model offers "Set and Forget" clamp pressure—and this is really cool. Rather than employing the standard end-of-handle adjustment nut, you can dial in clamp pressure from the middle of the tool and the pliers automatically adjust as needed. Grab a thick inch-wide nut or a small 1/4-inch piece, and the pliers will lock securely without requiring adjustment. This is a very nice time-saving feature when compared to standard locking pliers, which require incremental adjustments when grabbing work pieces of different widths.

EASIER ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustable-end wrenches are sometimes generically referred to as Crescent wrenches. However, "Crescent" is actually the brand name of an improved version of the adjustable-end wrench developed by the Crescent Tool and Horseshoe Company. The Crescent brand is now owned by Cooper Hand Tools.

New developments in adjustable wrenches have manufacturers looking beyond the traditional thumb-operated threaded knurl, which requires you to manually spin the adjustment device to set the jaw width. Although the traditional method is tried and true, it's also somewhat time-consuming. Now, Cooper Hand Tools and Irwin both offer slide-adjustment mechanisms; just press a button, slide the jaws to the desired position and release the button to lock them in place. These slide adjustable wrenches are undoubtedly much faster to use than traditional knurled models, and both manufacturers also print incremental measurements right on the jaws so you can easily see what the gripping width is.

Cooper's Crescent brand RapidSlide wrench has the slide adjuster in the handle. Irwin's Vise Grip Quick Adjusting Wrench has the adjuster in the head of the tool, where the thumb roller is traditionally located. As far as slide location, I prefer the Irwin design because there's no risk of my hand inadvertently interfering with the adjuster. The Irwin version locks in place more securely. With the Crescent version having the slide on the handle, I kept bumping into it and changing the setting. However, there is also a drawback to the Irwin design: The Irwin wrench can't adjust infinitely like the conventional threaded knurl style. This is because the slides lock in place against metal teeth, which in the case of SAE pliers is every 1/16 inch. To use

LockJaw's Auto-Grip Locking Pliers automatically adjust jaw width as needed.

Irwin's Vise-Grip Quick Adjusting Wrench
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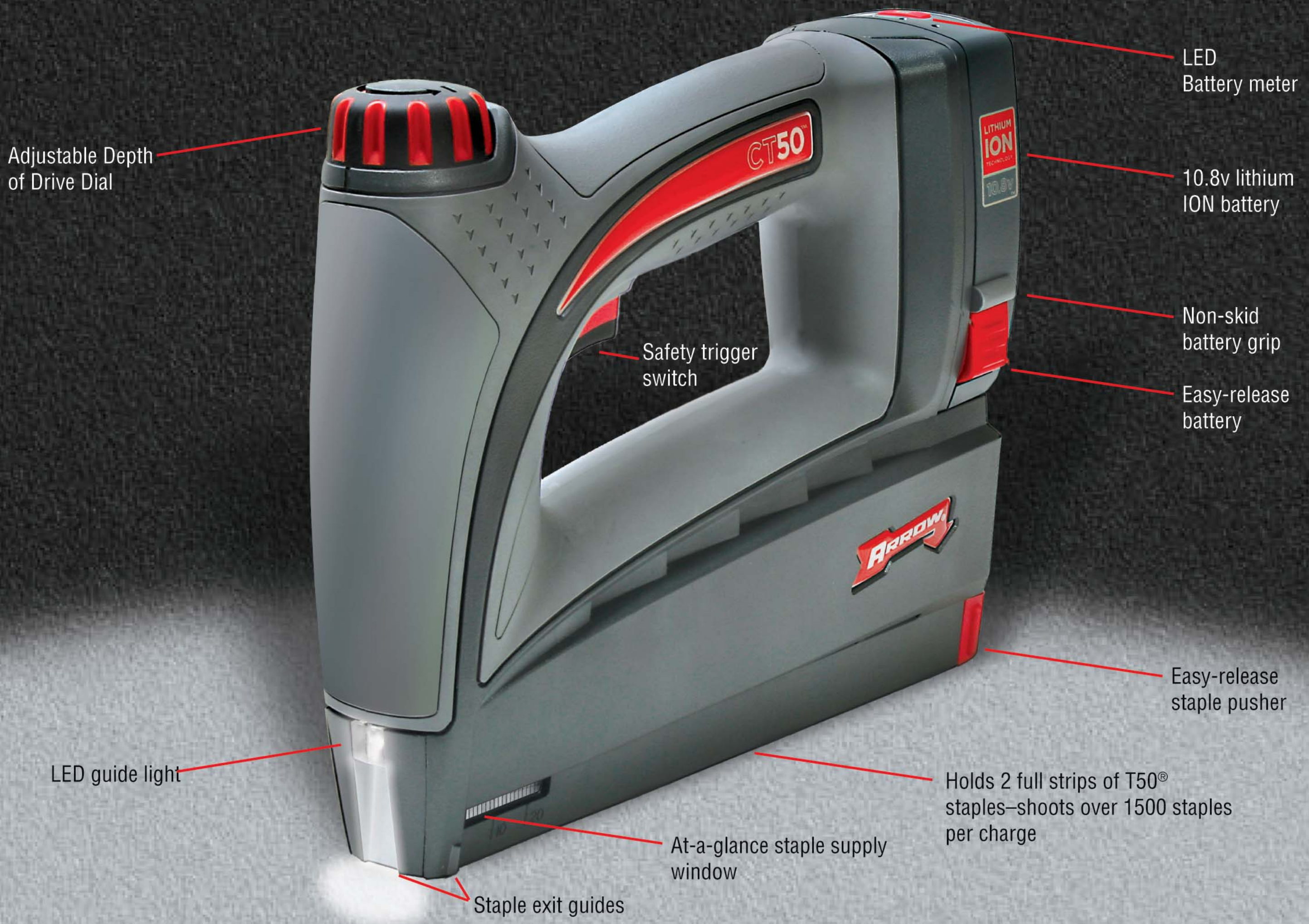
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an Irwin SAE slide-adjustment wrench on a metric fastener, you'll have some unwanted slop in the grip. So if you're relying on the Irwin as your wrench of choice, you'll need to invest in both a metric and a standard version. On the other hand, the Crescent RapidSlide can be used for both.

MORE CLEVER LEVERS

I'll wrap this up with a few other highlights, such as Channlock's trend toward bigger jaw widths on traditionally smaller tools. For big grips in small areas, Channelock is offering the Code Blue line of short-handled wrenches with extra wide jaw capacities. For example, Channelock's 6WCB offers a jaw capacity of 1.34 inches and the wrench is only 6-1/4 inches long. The Code Blue wrenches rely on the traditional threaded knurls, and both metric and SAE measurements are conveniently printed on either side of the tool.

Another interesting design comes from Loggerhead Tools' Bionic Wrench. Available in a variety of sizes and capacities, our test

Channellock's Code Blue line of wrenches offers big jaw capacities and short handles.
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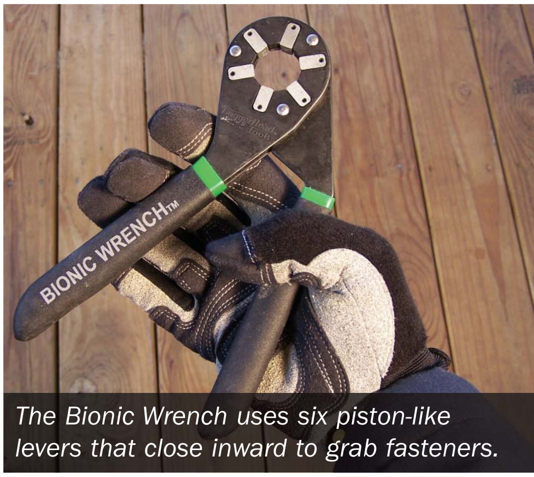
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unit was the 8-inch-long version that easily adjusts to fit any bolt or nut from 7/16 to 1 inch (or 11 to 20 millimeters). Just squeeze the handle and six piston-like steel levers close inward to grab the nut. This provides equal distribution of force across the flats so you don't strip the fastener.

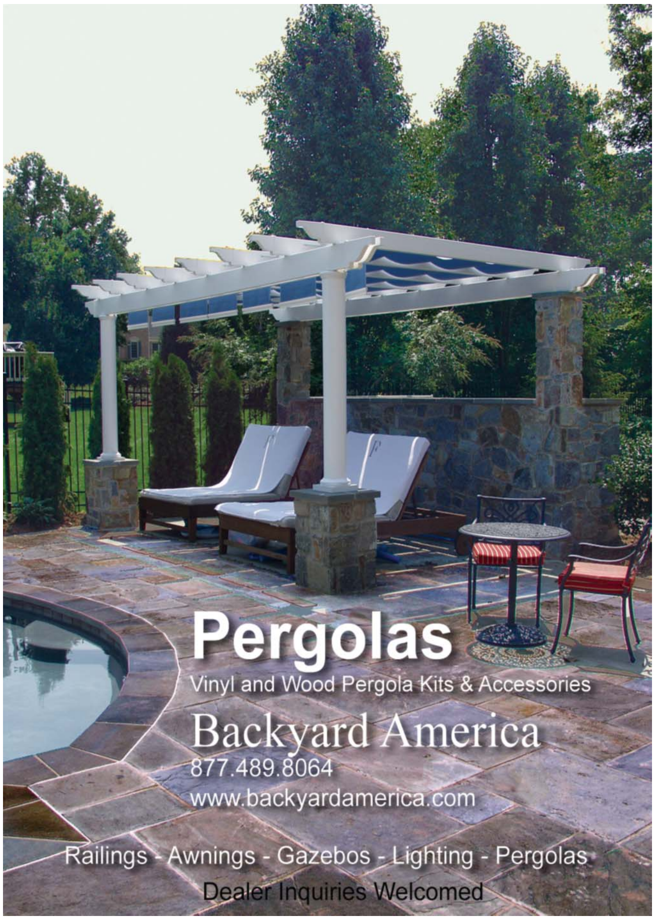
Next, there's the new Crescent R2 RapidRench, which is an adjustable ratcheting socket wrench. It has a wide jaw capacity to replace 38 of the most popular size sockets. And, because the jaws have an open, two-sided design, rather than a round and enclosed shape like sockets, the tool can be used on flat fasteners such as wing nuts and eye-hooks.

Also from Cooper is the company's line of Pro Series compound action pliers. The compound action hinges provide more than 60 percent more cutting or holding power with the same amount of effort compared to standard pliers.

GearWrench also offers a compound joint in its Double X needle-nose pliers. The compound joint lets the user activate the gripping action with minimal handle movement. The jaws open a greater distance than the handle, which makes this a great tool for reaching into very tight spaces.

Klein Tools, which specializes in professional-grade hand tools,

Crescent's R2 RapidRench is an adjustable ratcheting socket wrench.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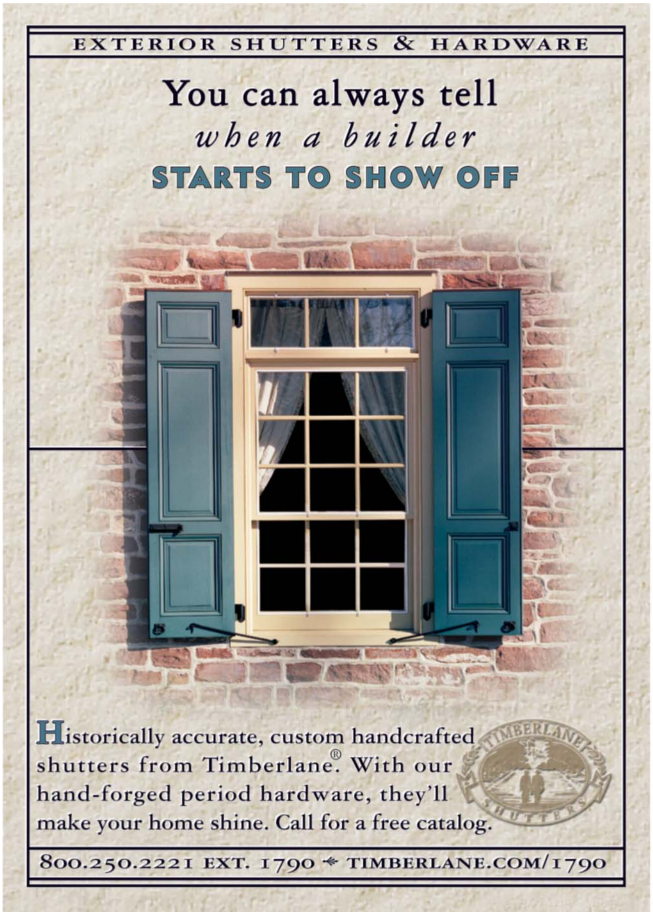
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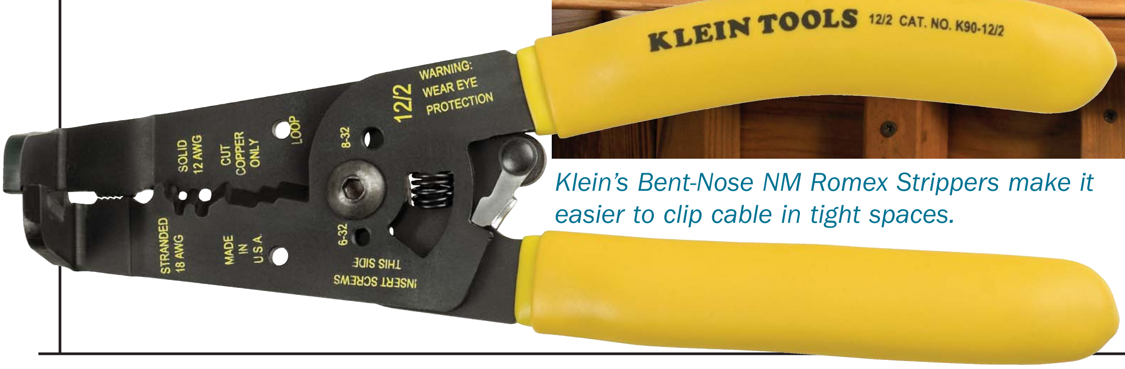
recently launched three new Bent-Nose NM Romex Strippers. The stripper's patented 90-degree angled nose allows for easy work in tight spaces. This eliminates the need to angle the tool, wire or hand, for quick removal of the outer jacket of non-metallic (NM) cable. The new angled-nose strippers can strip, cut and loop 10-, 12- or 14-AWG solid wire, and cleanly shear 6-32 and 8-32 screws.

The Extractor's no-slip grip pulls nails in no time.



Klein's Bent-Nose NM Romex Strippers make it easier to clip cable in tight spaces.

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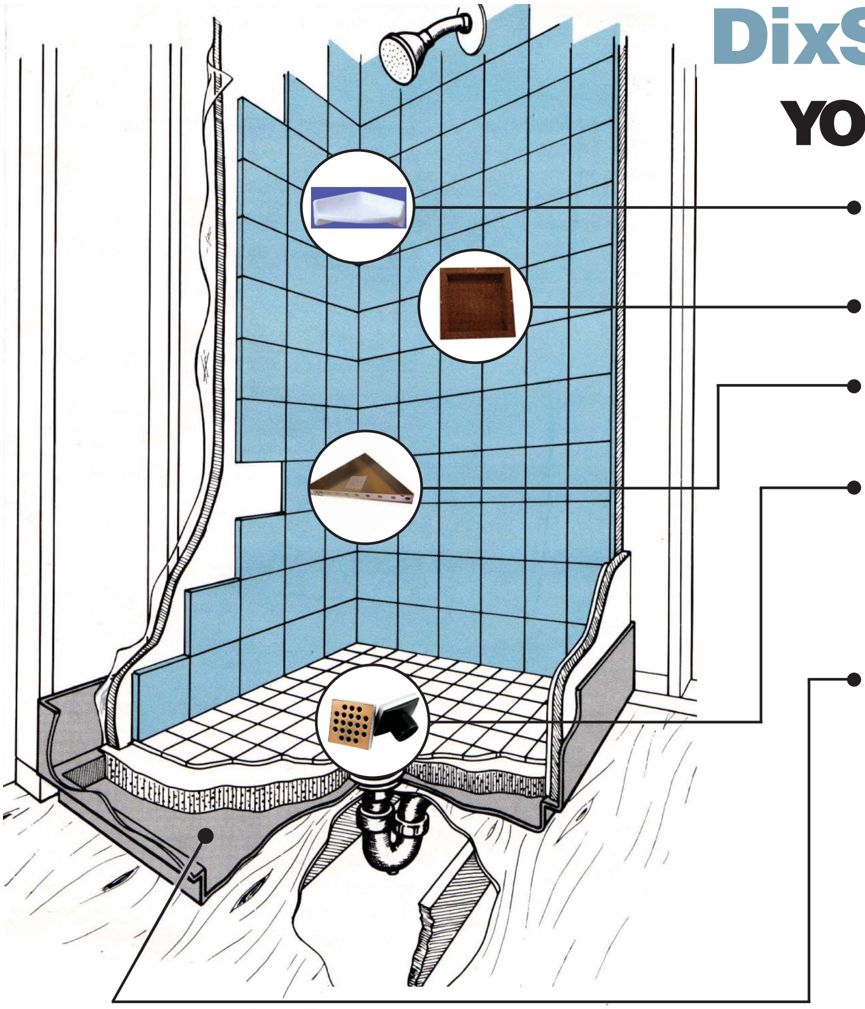

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The tool has a serrated nose that bends, shapes and pulls wire, and it features U.S.-made tool steel and Klein's Comfort Grip curved handles.

And last but not least is a tool I've used on several remodeling projects over the last two years. It's called the Extractor from Jefferson Tool. Designed specifically for pulling nails and other fasteners, the Extractor creates a grip that won't slip or shear. The jaw and teeth always keeps the minimum gripping force required to prevent slippage so it can pull tiny pin-nails and staples. I've used this puller on flooring replacement jobs and trim carpentry upgrades, when I had a zillion finish nails to tear out, and the quick rocking action of the Extractor saved lots of time and labor. **EHT**

TOOL SOURCES

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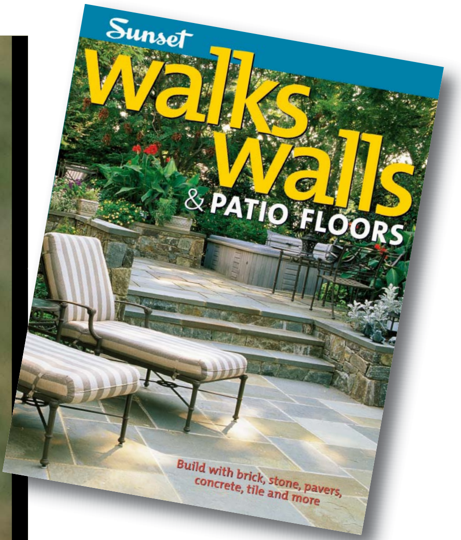
Build a Brick Garden Wall

A Step-by-step Guide to Enhancing your Back Yard



Photos courtesy Frank Gaglione

Editor's Note: *The following article is an excerpt from* Walks, Walls and Patio Floors, *the new release from Sunset Books. The book is full of great "how-to" stories and step-by-step photos on enhancing your outdoor living space with brick, stone, pavers, concrete, tile and more. To learn more, visit www.sunsetbooks.com.*

Low, short garden walls can be built with a single wythe—that is, with only one horizontal row of bricks. But such walls are not strong. You can even push them over by hand. Double-wythe brick walls are much stronger, though if they are more than 2 feet high, they may not be strong enough to act as retaining walls.

Brick walls must rest atop a solid concrete footing. Patterns, called bonds, allow you to build double-wythe walls that interlock in various ways. Bricks turned sideways to tie the wythes together are called headers, while the rest of the bricks are stretchers. Most bonds require cutting. To help you maintain rhythm and concentration as you throw mortar and lay bricks, cut a number of bricks ahead of time.

WORKING WITH MORTAR

A professional mason can throw a neat line of mortar at just the right thickness with ease and speed. Don't expect to equal that after a couple of hours of practice. But you can learn to throw mortar well enough to construct a straight wall with neat joints. Type N is usually a fine choice of mortar. Mix the mortar with a hoe or shovel in a wheelbarrow or mortar tray, or use a paddle mixer in a large plastic tub. You can scoop mortar out of the mixing container, but it's often easier to load a shovelful onto a hawk or a piece of plywood about 16 inches square and work from there.

Make up about one-third of a bag of mortar mix with just enough water so it's thick enough to hold its shape when you cut ridges in it with a mason's trowel. If you scoop up some mortar with the trowel and hold it upside down, the mortar should stick to the trowel for a second or two.

BUILDING A BRICK WALL

Before you start laying bricks, make a story pole so you can quickly measure bricks for the correct height. Lay a number of bricks with 3/8-inch spaces

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between them, on edge on a flat surface. Then lay a length of 1-by-2 or 1-by-4 next to the bricks and draw marks indicating the centers of each mortar joint.

Alternatively, purchase a ready-made story pole. A standard model has marks every 8 inches to indicate three courses of common brick plus the mortar joints.

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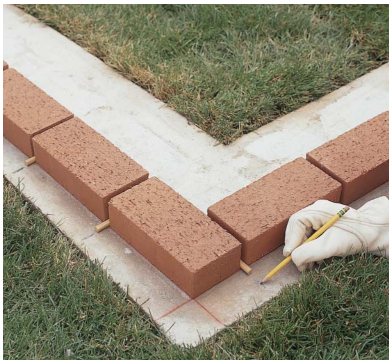
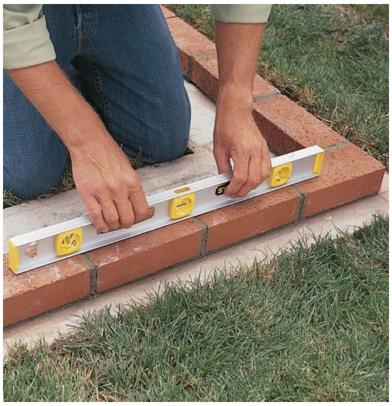
LAY A DRY RUN

Snap chalk lines on the footing indicating the outline of the wall. Place the bricks on the footing in a dry run, with 3⁄8-inch dowels between them to represent the joints. Make sure you understand how the bricks will be laid out at the corner. You might need to cut a brick or two.



Mark the centers of the joint locations on the footing.



Throw a line of mortar and place the first row of bricks, checking for level.

You may choose to minimize cutting by moving one wall over an inch or two. With a pencil, mark the footing for the centers of each joint.

LAY THE FIRST BRICKS

Remove the dry-laid bricks. Starting at a corner or at the end of a wall, throw a line of mortar for the first three bricks. Set and place the first brick. Butter one

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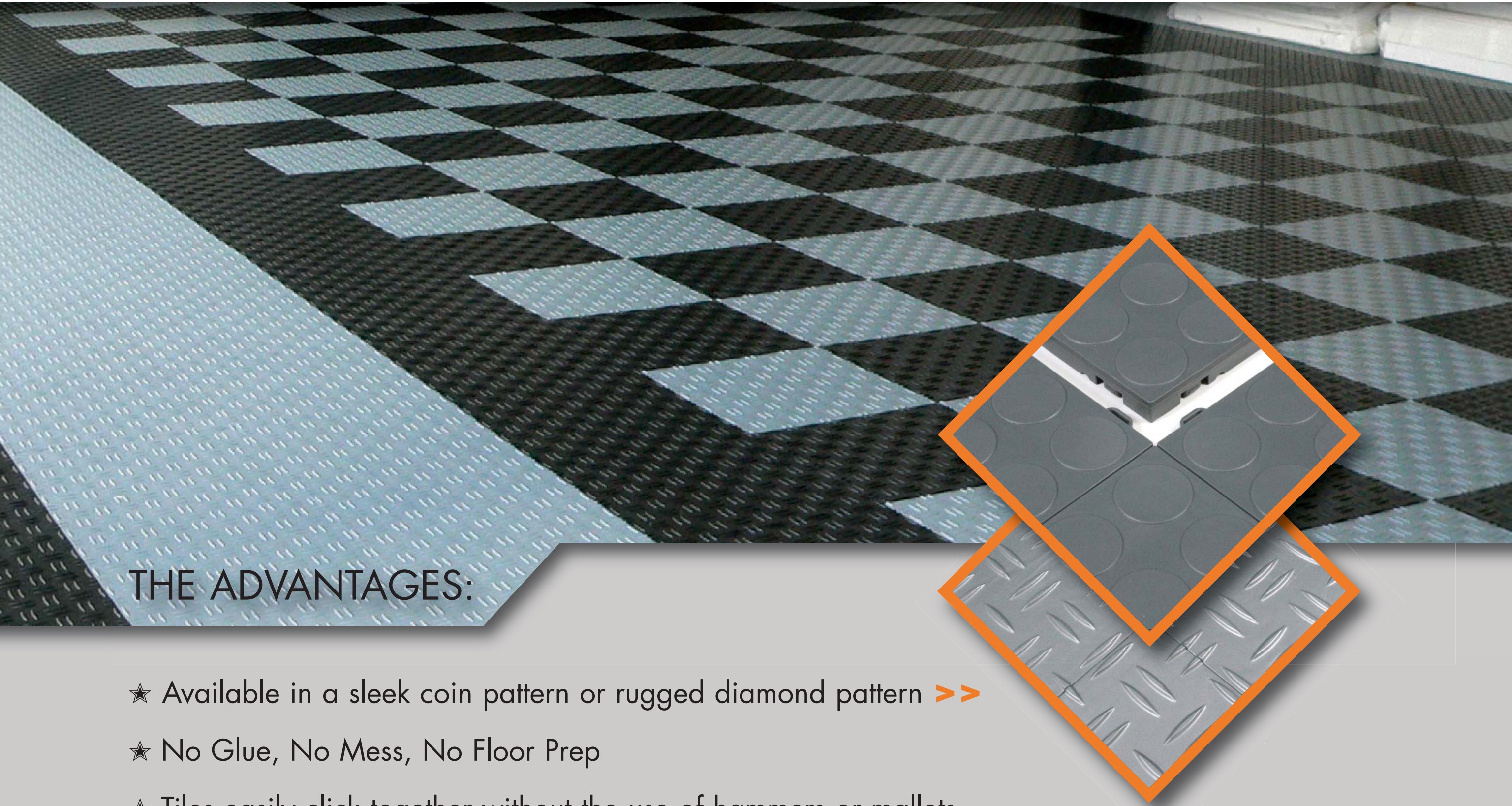

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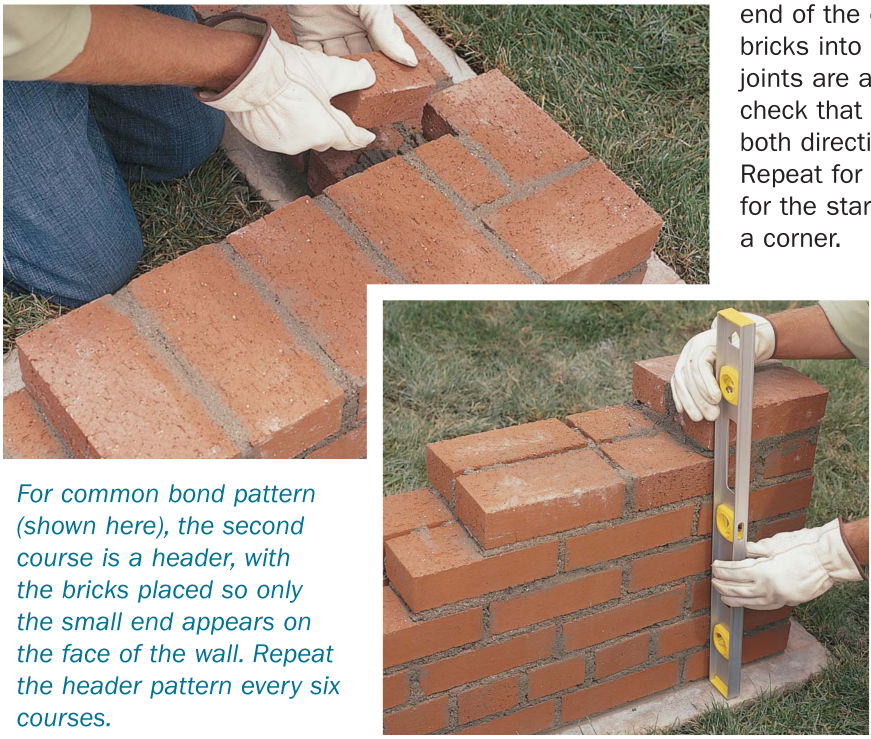
end of the other bricks and set them. Push the bricks into place and see that the centers of the joints are at the pencil marks. Use a level to check that the bricks form an even surface in both directions. Scrape away excess mortar. Repeat for the second wythe and lay bricks for the start of an adjoining wall if you are at a corner.



For common bond pattern (shown here), the second course is a header, with the bricks placed so only the small end appears on the face of the wall. Repeat the header pattern every six courses.

LAY THE HEADER COURSE

Be sure you understand how the bricks must be stacked. As you stack, every now and then hold a level against the joints to see that they line up vertically. For common bond (shown here), a header course needs two 3/4 bricks and two 1/4 bricks, known as closures, at each corner. Scrape away excess mortar as you go. Every so often, check the joints to see if they need to be struck.

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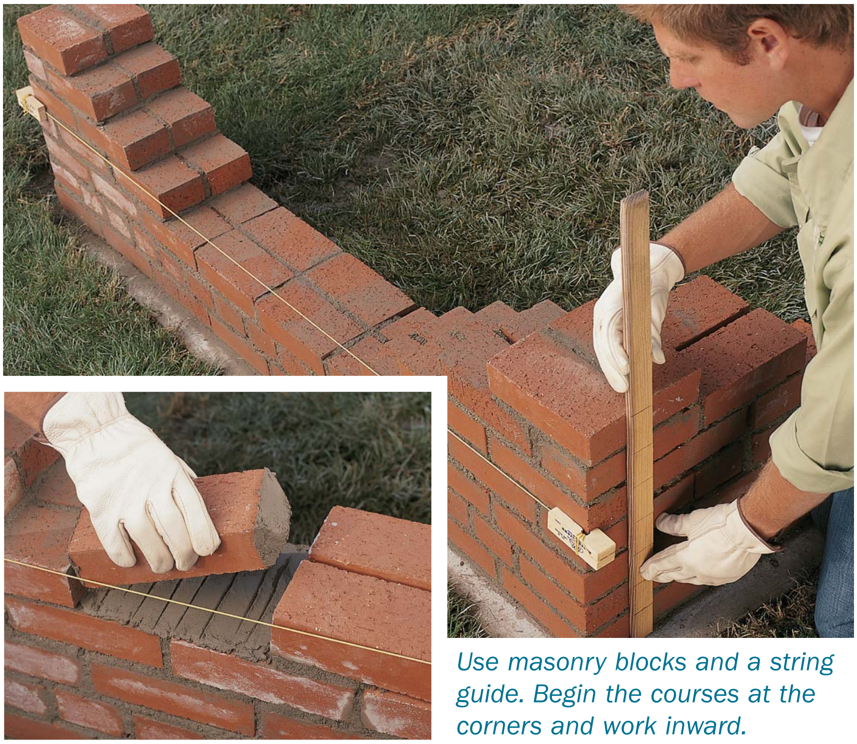
BUILD A LEAD

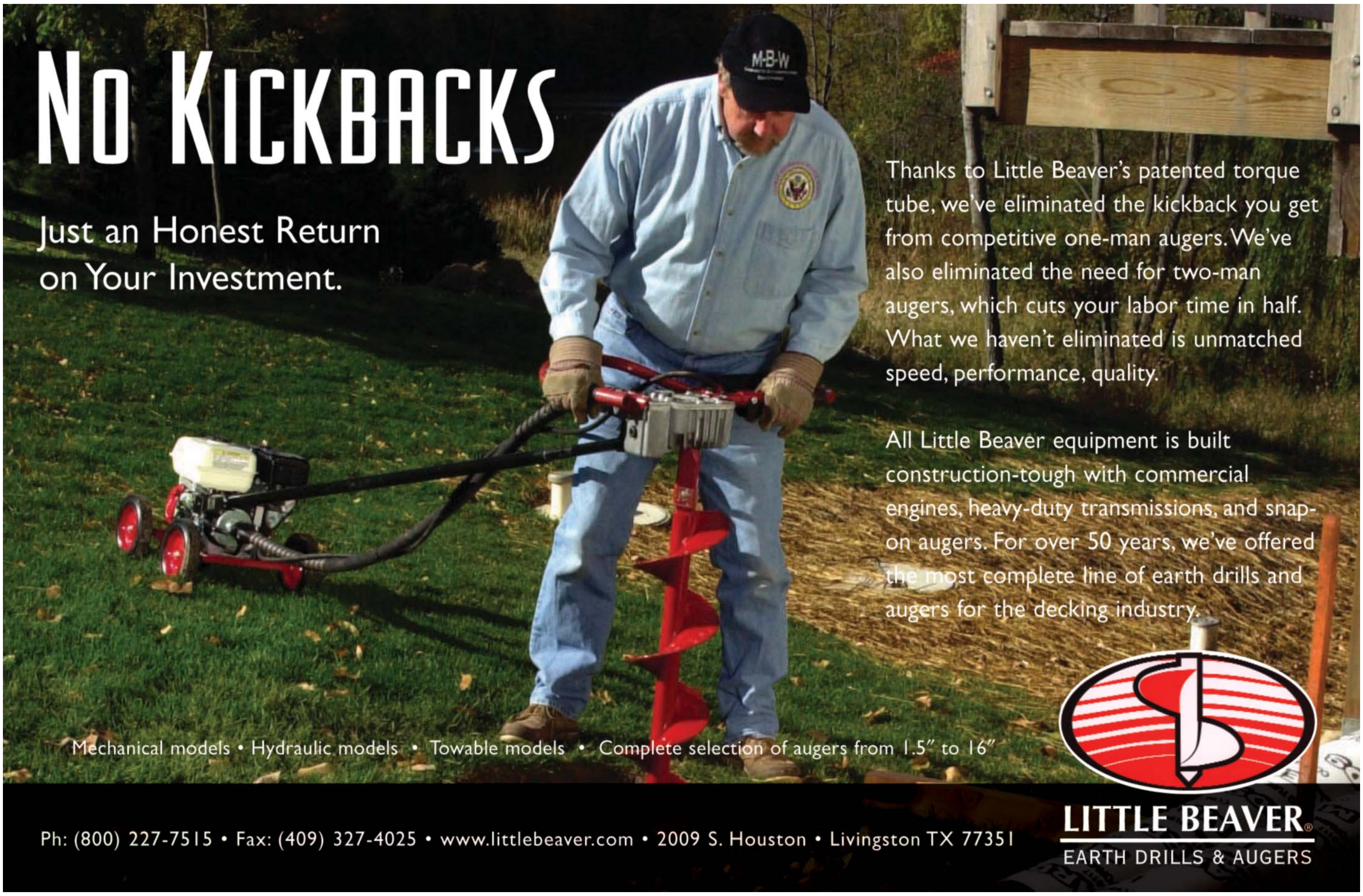
Continue building the corner or the end of the wall, which is called a lead. Make a stack seven or eight bricks high. As you go, use a level to check that the corner is plumb and the courses level. Use a story pole to check joint thickness. Do not slide bricks to adjust their position, unless you have laid them within the past two minutes.

STRING A LINE BETWEEN LEADS

Build a lead at the other end of the wall in the same way and check it with the story pole and level. Lay all the in-between bricks for the bottom course of both wythes, using the pencil lines as guides. Hook mason's blocks and stretch a mason's line



Use masonry blocks and a string guide. Begin the courses at the corners and work inward.



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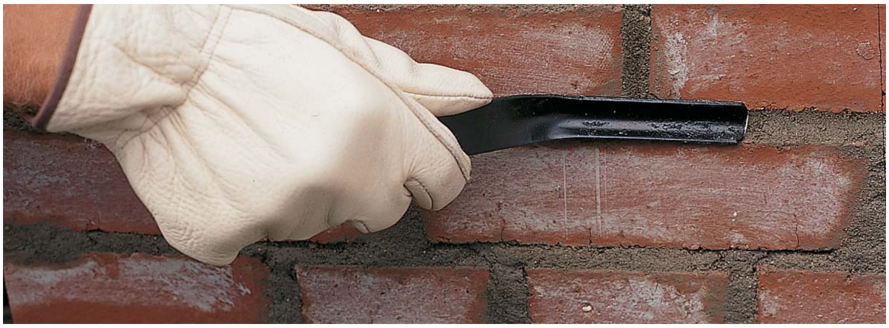

Smooth all joints with a brick jointer. This helps with appearance as well as drainage.

from one lead to the other at the center of a joint. The line should be taut and about 1⁄8 inch from the bricks.

FILL IN BETWEEN THE LEADS

For each course, move the line blocks up one joint and use the line as a guide for the height and for the outer edge of the wall. Don't let bricks touch the line. The last brick in the middle of a course, called the closure brick, is buttered at both ends. Butter it generously and slip it in straight down. Avoid sliding it. You may need to use a striking tool to force more mortar into one joint.

STRIKE THE JOINTS

Every 20 minutes or so, depending on weather conditions, test the joints by pressing with your thumb. If a thumbprint holds its shape, it's time to strike. With a brick jointer, smooth all horizontal joints, then smooth the verticals so water will drain properly. If a bit of mortar oozes out from the jointing tool, leave it or it will smear.

BRUSH AND CLEAN

Brush off excess mortar once it has started to harden and appears crumbly. If the mortar smears, stop and wait a few minutes longer. You may be able to wipe any smears away with a damp sponge, but take care not to get the joints very wet or you will weaken them. Alternatively, wait a day and then clean with a mild muriatic acid solution. **EHT**

Brush away excess mortar once it has started to harden.

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KIT-BUILT LOG HOMES

The romance of building a log home in the wilderness has long been the dream of many: A place, hacked out of the wilds by your own hands, in the traditional American pioneering spirit. Granted, much more is involved these days than simply cutting down a few trees and stacking the logs together. But, yes, you can build your own log home in a variety of ways, depending on the amount of work, time and money you wish to invest.

Today, log homes are available in a wide variety of styles, shapes, sizes and materials and can range from a simple cabin in the woods to an ultra-sophisticated mansion, complete with multi-car garages, basement and all the amenities. Log homes offer a great deal. They are aesthetically beautiful, but also a home that is cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter due to the bulk of the materials. Not only is this more energy efficient, but also a savings on the environment.

Log homes help conserve natural resources. It takes less wood to construct some log homes because there isn't the waste of milling the wood. The energy needed to mill the wood is also saved. The logs used are often the "thinning" trees normally removed to allow better grade trees to grow to saw-log size.

By Monte Burch

KIT-BUILT

LOG HOMES

One of the main advantages homeowners find, however, is the ease of maintenance. No painting, scraping and all the other hard work associated with many building exteriors. Another advantage in many cases is log homes usually cost less than comparable stick-built homes, and if you want to trade your own sweat for dollars, you can really save.

CHOICES, CHOICES

Log buildings can be acquired in several ways. The least expensive, but hardest work is to cut or purchase logs and build your own log home. To do this requires lumberjacking and log-building skills, plenty of time and lots of muscle. Wholesale Logs of America (www.wholesalelogsamerica.com) provides a variety of log sizes and materials direct from the mill.

The simplest and most expensive method is to purchase a manufactured log home and have it erected by the log home manufacturer. The logs in these buildings are normally milled to precise shapes to ensure tight, secure buildings. Or, you may prefer to have a log crafter build your home. These are usually "one-of-a-kind" homes built to the purchaser's designs. Both of these cases are commonly "turn-key" jobs, sometimes right down to the paint, draperies and carpeting.

Other packages consist of shells constructed by the dealer or a contractor working for the dealer. In this case the contractor erects the log shell and encloses the house. You do all the finish work, such as wiring, plumbing, interior finishing, trimming and in some cases, roof shingling. This is an excellent way to get started if you don't have the experience,

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time or tools to construct the log shell. Some do-it-yourselfers prefer the opposite approach: constructing the house shell, then subcontracting other chores. Of course, the more you can do yourself, the greater the savings.

A closed shell usually consists of girders, floor joists, floor insulation, subflooring, perimeter log walls, caulking, windows with screens, exterior doors, roof support systems, roof insulation, roof sheathing and sometimes shingles—plus porches and decks, if included in the plans. In essence, everything needed to lock up your home and keep its interior weather-resistant is included. As with any other type of house construction, but even more so with log construction, you should plan to begin construction in plenty of time to enclose the building before fall and winter weather sets in.

CABIN IN A KIT

The next step, involving more work but a great deal less cost, is to purchase a "kit" log home and erect it yourself. This is essentially a package of "precut" logs. Package homes are available in a wide variety of types. For instance you can purchase only milled or debarked logs if you wish to cut your own notches, window and door openings. You can also purchase a kit consisting of only the walls, along with spikes, gaskets and other items needed. Another type is the "shell" kit, which includes the walls, roof and floor framing, and sometimes the windows and doors. You will typically have to supply the roofing, finish flooring, interior finishes and so forth. Eagle Panel Systems (www.eaglepanelsystems.com) sell complete cathedral roof systems, especially designed for log homes. These are typical tongue-and-groove wood panels and rigid foam insulation, as well as pre-applied tongue-and-groove sheathing.

If you already have the land, all that's necessary is to pick the home style you desire from the many offered by kit-home manufacturers. The manufacturer may even help arrange financing. Companies usually do not provide

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financing, but can assist in finding a lender. Financing is one factor you should look into at the start. Some lenders will not do country property or log construction projects. First, understand what you need, and then shop around.

With financing arranged, order your log home package and, while waiting for delivery, prepare the site and construct the foundation. Within a matter of weeks, the kit arrives on flatbed trailer trucks. A quality shell kit can be erected in a matter of days, usually within a month, even by inexperienced builders. Kit log homes are delivered to your site on large, 40-foot trailer trucks. Your site, including the access road, must be able to accommodate a truck of this size with enough room to properly unload the materials, and also be able to turn around and get out. There must also be plenty of room to store the logs. A crew of friends and neighbors should be on hand to help unload the truck when it arrives because some drivers may refuse to do the unloading. Ask what is needed for delivery and unloading before ordering.

Although kit log homes are relatively easy to build, they require extensive planning. There are hundreds of kit log homes available from almost just as many manufacturers. Most are reliable and offer a good product. But as in all of life, there are a few bad apples in the barrel. Shop around when considering a home package. A life savings invested in a house of poor materials, of poor design or shoddy joinery can create big disappointments. Consult several log home companies. Ask about modifying standard plans to suit your lifestyle. Most companies are willing to make substantial changes to suit individual requirements. In fact, you may be able to send your own design for appraisal and a quote.

When purchasing a manufactured log home kit, make absolutely sure you understand exactly what will be furnished and how. In most instances you will be purchasing a building from a photo or drawing and a floor plan. All materials for log porches and balconies should be included if they are in the plans for the home. Models with cathedral ceilings should have cathedral ceiling rafters and collar ties. Accessory materials, such as

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shingles, wiring, plumbing and interior partitions can usually be purchased locally at a lower cost than having them shipped. Plus, when shopping locally you can select the grade and type of material. The complete shell kit should come with a set of instructions and numbered logs. These take quite a bit of effort in construction, but with patience and a little skill, you can build your own log home.

KIT CONSIDERATIONS

Log buildings are constructed in several ways, and kits can be purchased with different types of construction. This includes Scandinavian full-scribed, chinked round logs, milled square logs, hand-hewn square (or simulated hand-hewn), rustic slabbed logs and milled logs with rounded exteriors and flat interiors. Kits with uniform-size, milled logs are more expensive because it takes more effort to mill the logs to the same size and shape. There are, however, definite advantages to uniform-size logs. No "shelves" are formed on the inside or outside of the house to catch rainwater, dust or dirt. Using uniform logs also saves construction time, and makes installation of interior woodwork much easier.

Kit logs are milled in various cross sections. The basic shapes are: two-sided, three-sided, four-sided and completely turned or shaped. A two-sided log has two parallel sides and is normally cut whole from one tree with the heart of the tree left in. These are usually cut from a tree larger than 8 inches in diameter. Three-sided logs may or may not be cut from a whole tree. In most instances they are not. These logs are usually cut from trees

> “YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN LOG HOME IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, DEPENDING ON THE AMOUNT OF WORK, TIME AND MONEY YOU WISH TO INVEST.”

24 inches or larger in diameter. All timbers are cut to a uniform size. A four-sided log is usually cut from a larger log, but sometimes a whole tree is used.

Turned logs are normally cut from a whole tree, using giant lathes or milling machines to turn the log to a uniform diameter. These logs range from 6- to 12-inches in diameter. A shaped log is usually four-sided. Three sides are cut flat and the fourth shaped to one of several different exterior designs.

A whole log with the full heart of the tree offers the best durability. If the entire heart is in the log, it won’t check through in seasoning and will be more rot-resistant. Cut logs can check entirely through the log. In the case of milled logs, sometimes the flat surfaces utilize a sealant or foam strip between them. In other instances, splines or tongue-and-grooves are milled into the mating surfaces. Corner joints may be scribed, scribed and chinked, hewn and chinked, or with a variety of notched or tongue-and-groove joints. In some of the latter cases, the joints are also insulated with foam insulation. (Note: “Chinking” is the gritty, mortar-like material seen between courses of logs in many log homes. Modern Chinking is a flexible, textured sealant.)

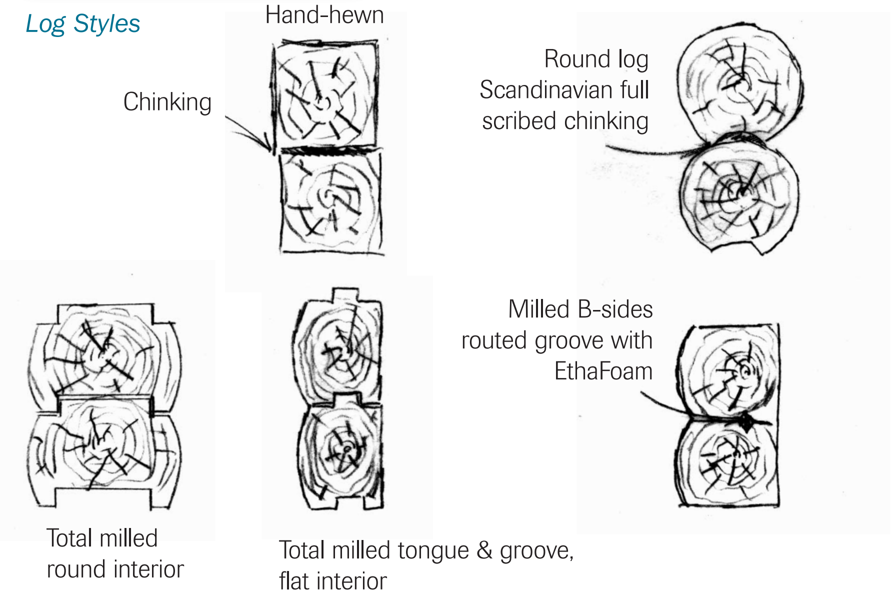
Corner styles also vary, and can not only provide the aesthetic appeal, but depending on the style, a difference in construction effort and longevity. Scandinavian scribed log construction typically utilizes interlocking corners. The logs are notched to interlock at the corners with a half-height difference. The Scandinavian scribe is one of the most difficult corners to construct as you must also scribe the log bottom to fit over the log below it. This notch is more commonly used by custom log builders, rather than in kits. A similar method is the Swedish cope saddle notch. In this case the logs are not scribed on their bottoms, but fit full with milled joints or splines. This makes it somewhat easier to do and is a common kit-home style. A similar notch is the double-notch. This consists of a notch on top and one on the bottom of the crossing logs. This also alleviates the need for cutting the bottom cup or groove, but produces a much weaker corner joint.

A very simple joint is the sharp notch. This is quick and easy to build and again, no under cup or groove is used. This is a common corner joint simple cabins, and rarely seen with kit buildings. With the sharp notch method the joints must be well chinked. The ends of the logs have a sharp knife edge cut on their tops, and their undersides cut to fit the notch below them. It doesn't take much cutting to produce this corner joint.

The butt-and-pass is one of the joineries typically used with kit-built homes and logs that are milled on at least the top and bottom and sometimes on the inside as well, creating a flat interior wall. The first sill logs are laid with the log ends protruding past the foundation the desired amount. These ends can be further trimmed after the walls have been erected. The adjoining logs are cut so their butt ends meet the outside corners of the protruding logs. If the inside faces are round, for a tight joint, the butt ends should be scribed to meet the contour of the adjoining log. As the joints are basically open, they should be well caulked. This style produces a symmetrical and attractive interior wall surface, but is not as strong as other joints.

A corner notch is also fairly simple, but is more commonly used in post-and-beam or when several

Log Styles



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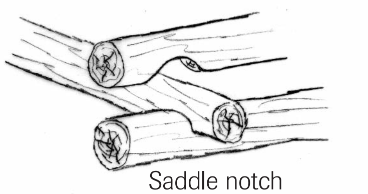
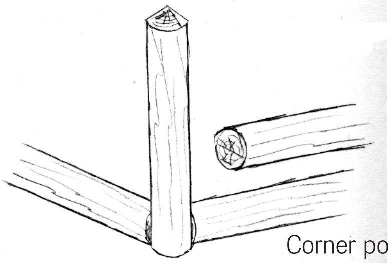
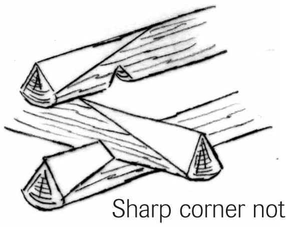
materials and styles are used in one building. One method of corner notch is to cut a slot in the corner logs and then cut a notch in the end of the adjoining logs and use a spline.

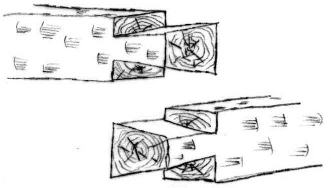
The dovetail notch, used with hand-hewn logs, is a difficult notch to create by hand, but is sometimes cut by machine for kit-homes. This creates a traditional American log cabin appearance. Because the notch locks the logs together, it's one of the strongest. The double dovetail is even stronger. The ends of the logs may protrude slightly, but are more commonly cut flush.

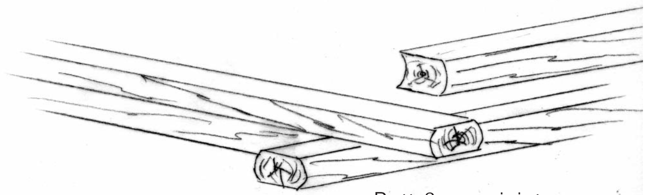
The type of wood used for the logs is also important. Depending on the manufacturer, logs may be of pine, cedar, spruce, oak, aspen, larch or cypress. Pine is used in about 80 percent of the log home kits. It's easy to work and has a


Saddle notch


Corner post


Sharp corner notch


Hand-hewn dovetail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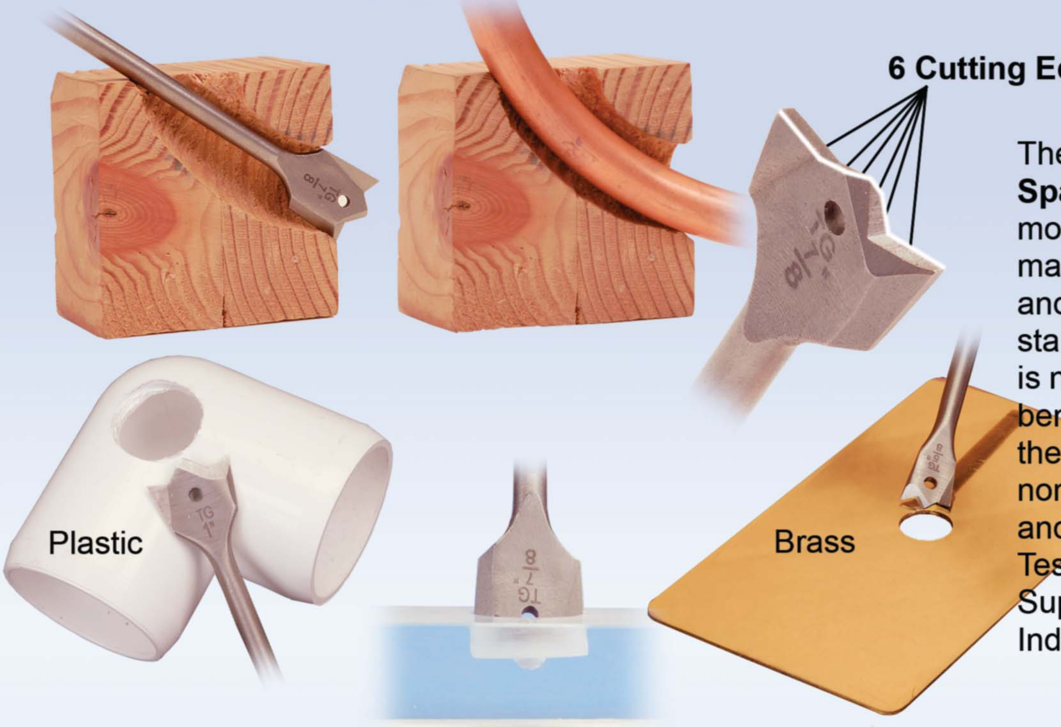

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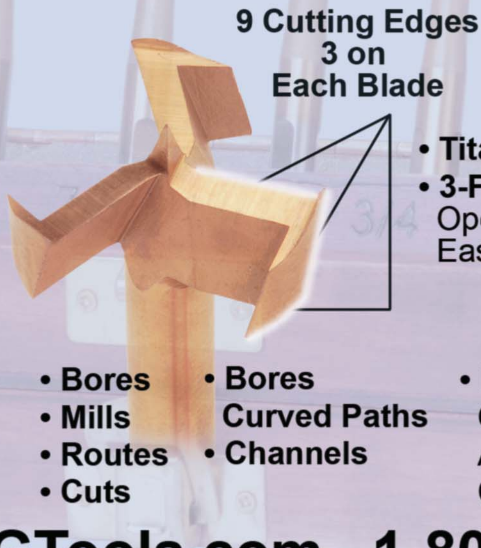

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pleasant odor. Cedar is another excellent choice, especially Western red cedar. Spruce is also popular. Spruce is often cut from standing dead timber, which reduces drying time and shrinkage problems. Spruce, however, is subject to severe cracking and checking. Although some of this is cosmetic, some cracks run entirely through the log, particularly if the log is milled to shape. Larch, aspen, and cypress are used to lesser degrees. Oak is used in some areas, but the odor, weight and high value of oak for other purposes, limits its use for kit-built homes. Oak, however is the most common material used for hewed log homes. Oak checks severely, pine not as much, and cedar negligibly. In better-quality packages, all the bark will be removed from the logs.

Depending on the kit, the logs may or may not be treated against decay and insect infestation. Many kit-log builders pressure-treat the logs. A variety of preservatives are available these days, such as Perma-Chink (www.permachink.com) clear coatings, that are environmentally friendly, clean and easy to apply. These are typically applied to the exterior after the logs are erected. Some are also applied to the interior to maintain the color of the logs and add to the décor.

Proper construction details can also make a difference in preventing decay and log deterioration. Good drainage around the foundation is important so storm water can't collect around and under the building. The site should be graded so water drains away from the building. For a single-story building, the overhang should project 23 inches and the eaves should extend beyond roof supporting members. A steeper pitched roof can also drain away rainwater faster.

In the old days the spaces between the logs were chinked with materials on hand, including moss, mud, grass and even chunks of wood. Modern chinking, however, often consists of a wide range of materials, such as Log Jam and Chinker's Edge (www.sashco.com). They are easy to use and will even stay flexible.

Can you do it yourself? Yes you can, and people do it all the time. Raising a log building, however, takes muscle-power, skills and tools. The skills are fairly easily learned and most kit-home manufacturers provide a fairly comprehensive construction manual, in addition to the floor and elevation

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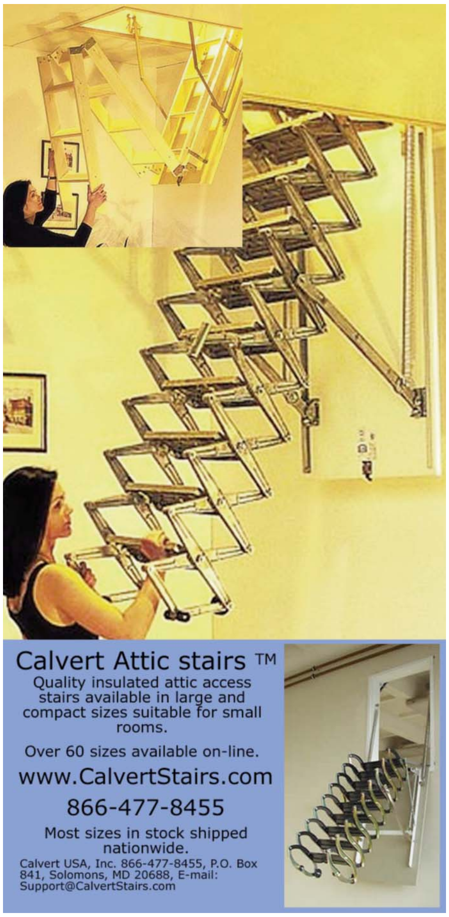

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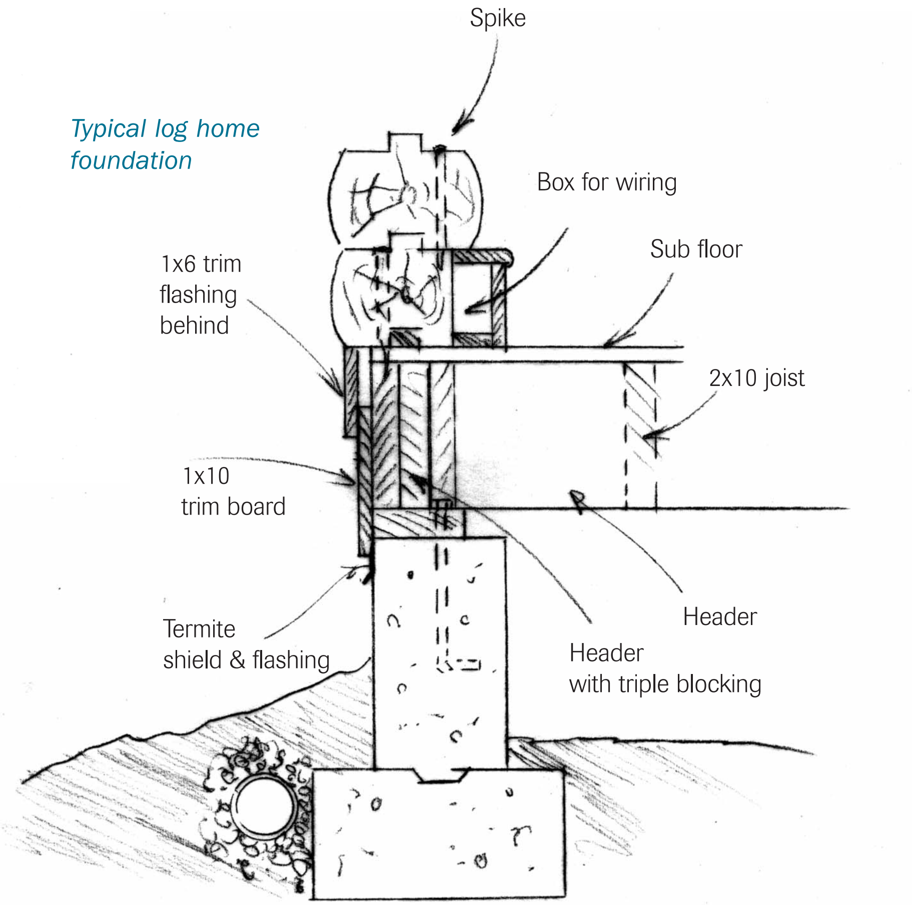
plan, and a numbered set of logs to match. You'll probably need a good medium-size chainsaw, and a heavy sledge for driving spikes. You'll also need standard construction carpenter's tools including hammers, cordless drills and saws, levels, squares and so forth.

For more information on kit-built homes, contact: www.loghomesnetwork.com, www.LHIinfo.com. **EHT**

Editor's Note: *Monte Burch is the author of The Complete Guide to Building Log Homes, which is available in paperback from www.MonteBurch.com.*



Typical log home foundation

Spike
Box for wiring
Sub floor
1x6 trim flashing behind
2x10 joist
1x10 trim board
Termite shield & flashing
Header
Header with triple blocking

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BETTER BUILT-IN

Converting a Closet to Cabinets

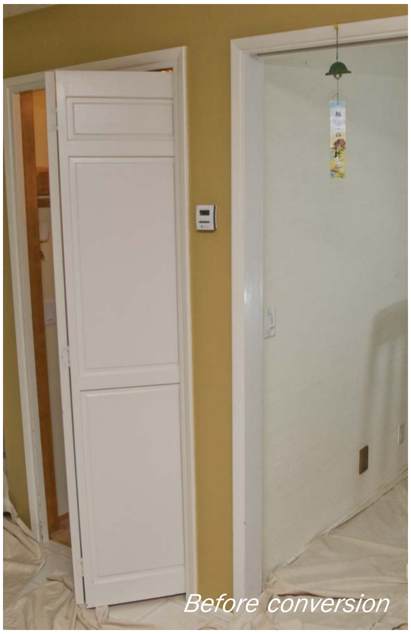
By Larry Walton

On several occasions, homeowner Amy Harter wished she had dish storage in her dining room. However, there really wasn't enough room for a freestanding curio or china cabinet.

It wasn't until husband Scott started talking about getting things organized in the kitchen with some recycle bins that they started looking at the pantry closet as a flexible space. It just happened that the pantry closet where they wanted to put a cabinet with recycle bins also shared a wall with the dining room.

What if they could use the pantry closet space for both a kitchen cabinet and a display/dining ware storage cabinet in the adjoining dining room? With these thoughts in mind, Amy called Stan Davis of Schar Construction to come over and tell them if their idea would work. Soon afterward, Stan got to work on the conversion.

Stan noted their ideas, and did some measuring. The existing closet was under the first flight of stairs and had an opening only into the kitchen area.



Before conversion

The closet was deep enough to accommodate a nice built-in cabinet at the door opening on the kitchen side while leaving room for another built-in cabinet on the dining room side.

Stan made some sketches and got the cabinet design concept to the guys at Lonne's Cabinet Shop in Springfield, Oregon. He scheduled an install for later that month.

FITTING IN

There are three common methods to fitting built-in cabinets into an opening. The first method is to build the cabinet carcass or box slightly smaller than the opening the cabinet will occupy. The cabinet maker then adds a face frame, which extends out wider than the opening to cover the gap and any rough edges in the opening.

The second method is to build the cabinet so the face frame fits within the opening, and then use casing to bridge between the cabinet face frame and the wall surface.

The third method requires that the corners of the opening be finished and the cabinet built as a net fit, or with scribes around the outside that can be shaped exactly to fit the opening.

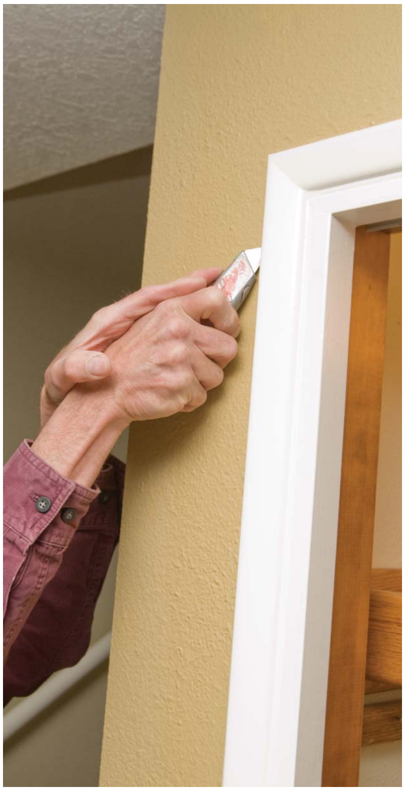
Davis chose method two for both the kitchen and dining room cabinets because he wanted to trim the cabinets with casing that matched the door opening between the kitchen and dining room.

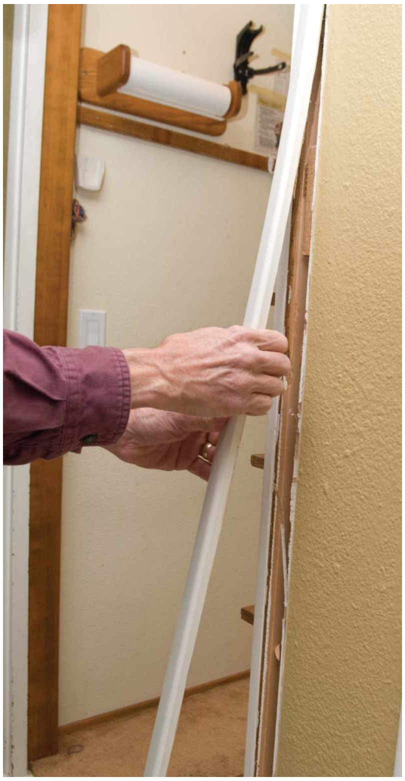
The homeowners were very happy with their new cabinets, which were installed by removing the bifold door, cutting back the shelving, re-routing a wire, framing an additional opening, then installing and trimming the cabinets.

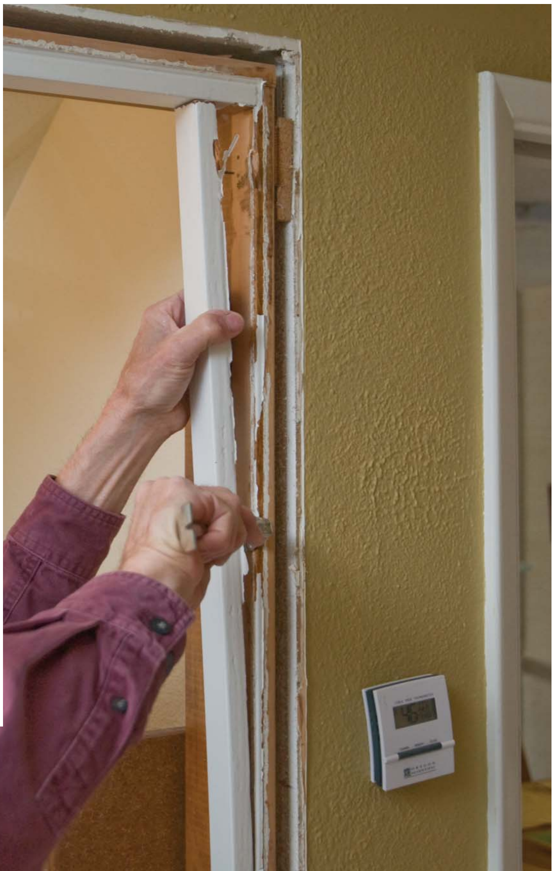
HOW TO DO IT

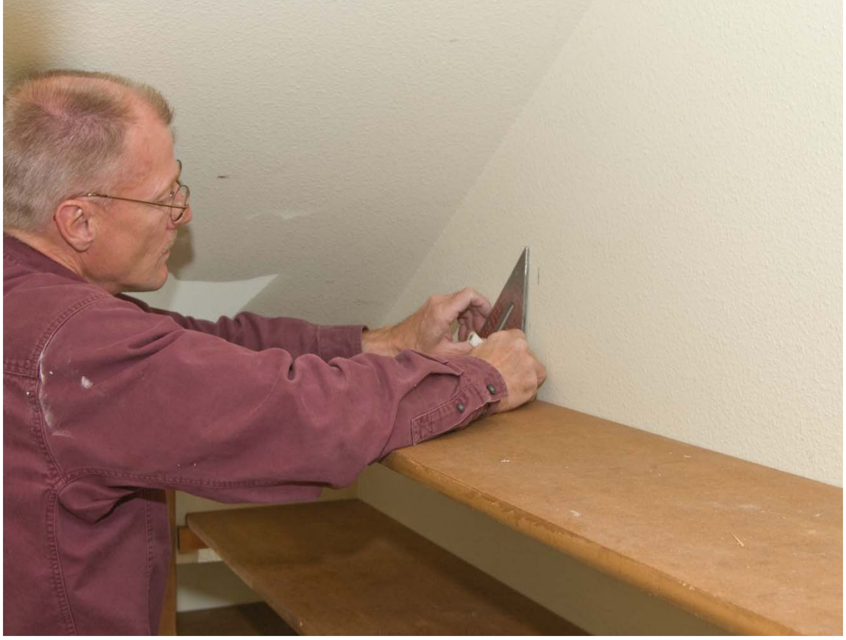
After removing the bi-fold doors, Davis used a utility knife to cut the caulking between the casing and the wall surface. This is an important step when removing trim, because the caulk can pull the paper face off the drywall requiring unnecessary repairs to complete the project.

Even with the caulking cut, Davis took care not to damage









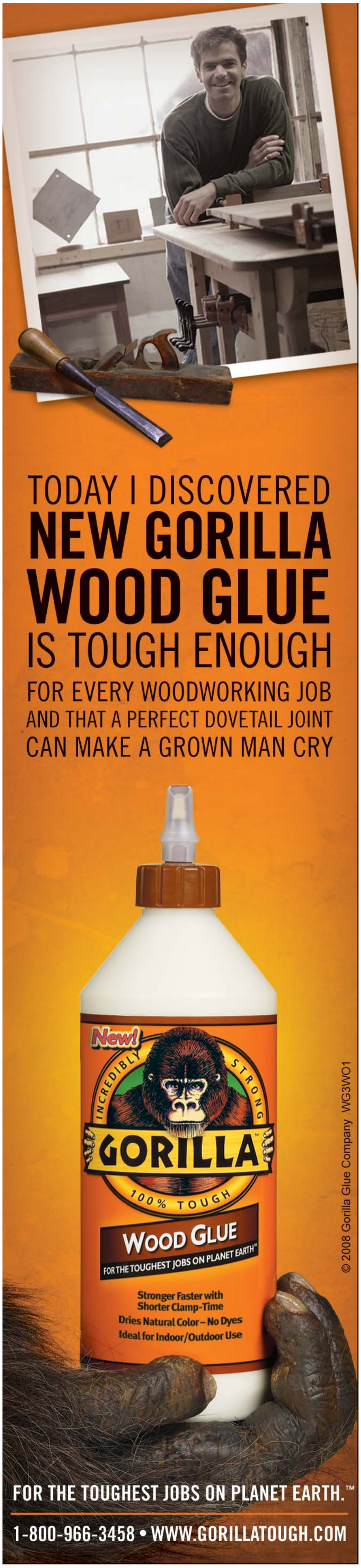
the walls or floors while removing the casing. Once the casing was off, Davis made quick work of removing the bifold, track, half-jamb and full jamb.

One of the interesting aspects of this project was that it still made use of storage behind the cabinets in the odd-shaped closet. One of the cabinets was designed to allow access through the back, so Davis marked the shelves to be cut so the remaining shelves could still be used.

Davis started each shelf cut with a circular saw. He then finished each shelf cut with his Fein MultiMaster.

The bifold door opening would accommodate the kitchen cabinet, but an opening had to be cut from the closet to the dining room for the curio cabinet. Davis made all of the layout marks inside the closet where they would not be seen.

Davis used his old 9-volt Makita cordless circular saw to cut through the drywall because he could set the depth of the cut and stay out of any wiring that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might be in the wall. You can never be quite sure what's inside a wall until you get it opened up.

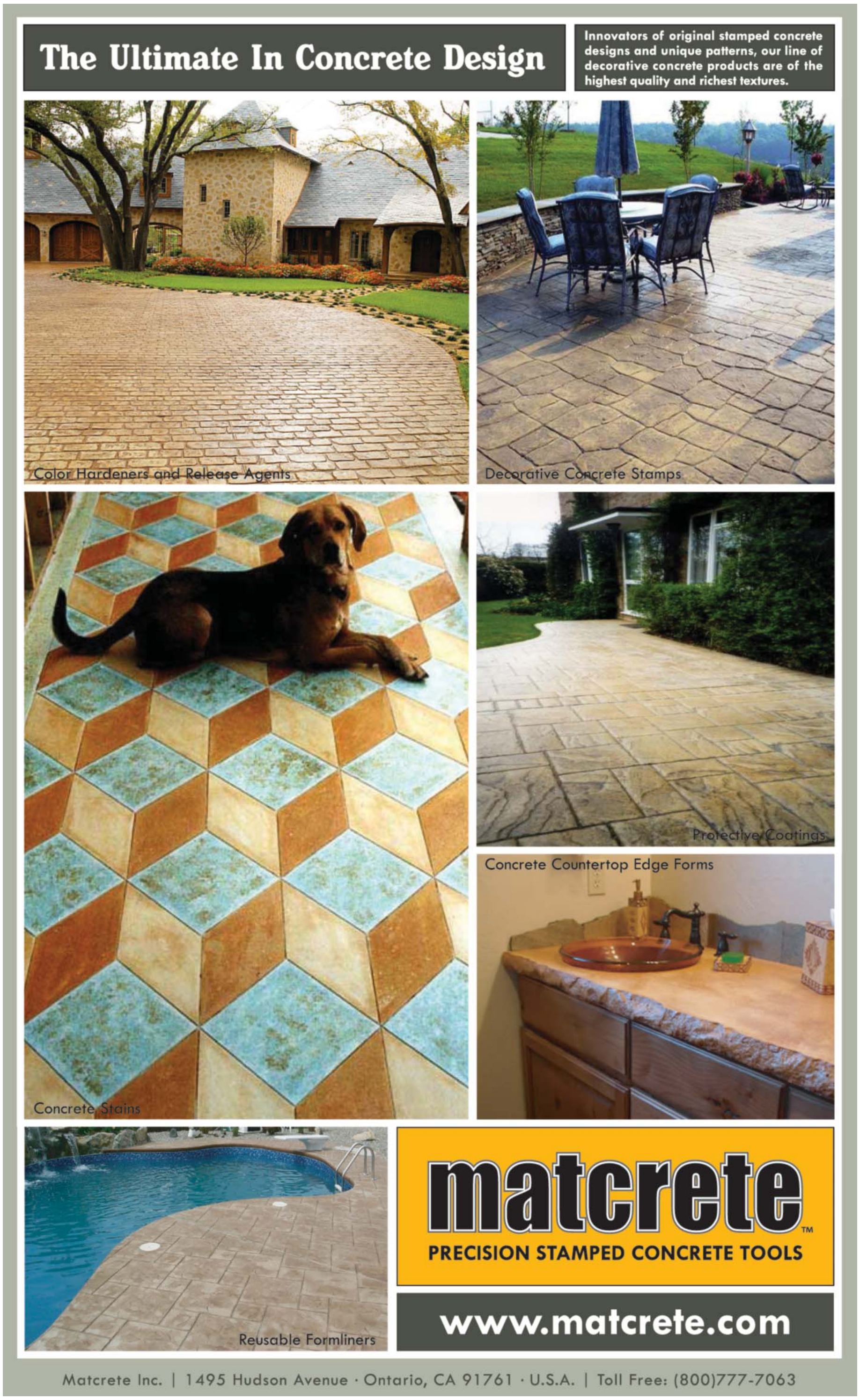
Davis used a reciprocating saw to cut the framing out of what

would be the new opening into the dining room.

Davis cut in a couple of j-boxes to reroute the wiring. A j-box must be used anywhere you

MULTIMASTER

splice wires. He used one strand of 12-gauge wire with a hook bent in the end to hook and pull the end of his wire snake from the adjacent stud bay into the cabinet opening.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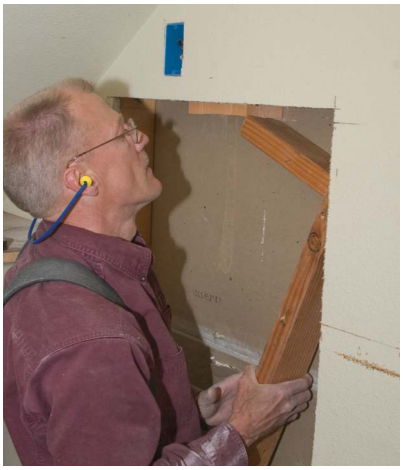
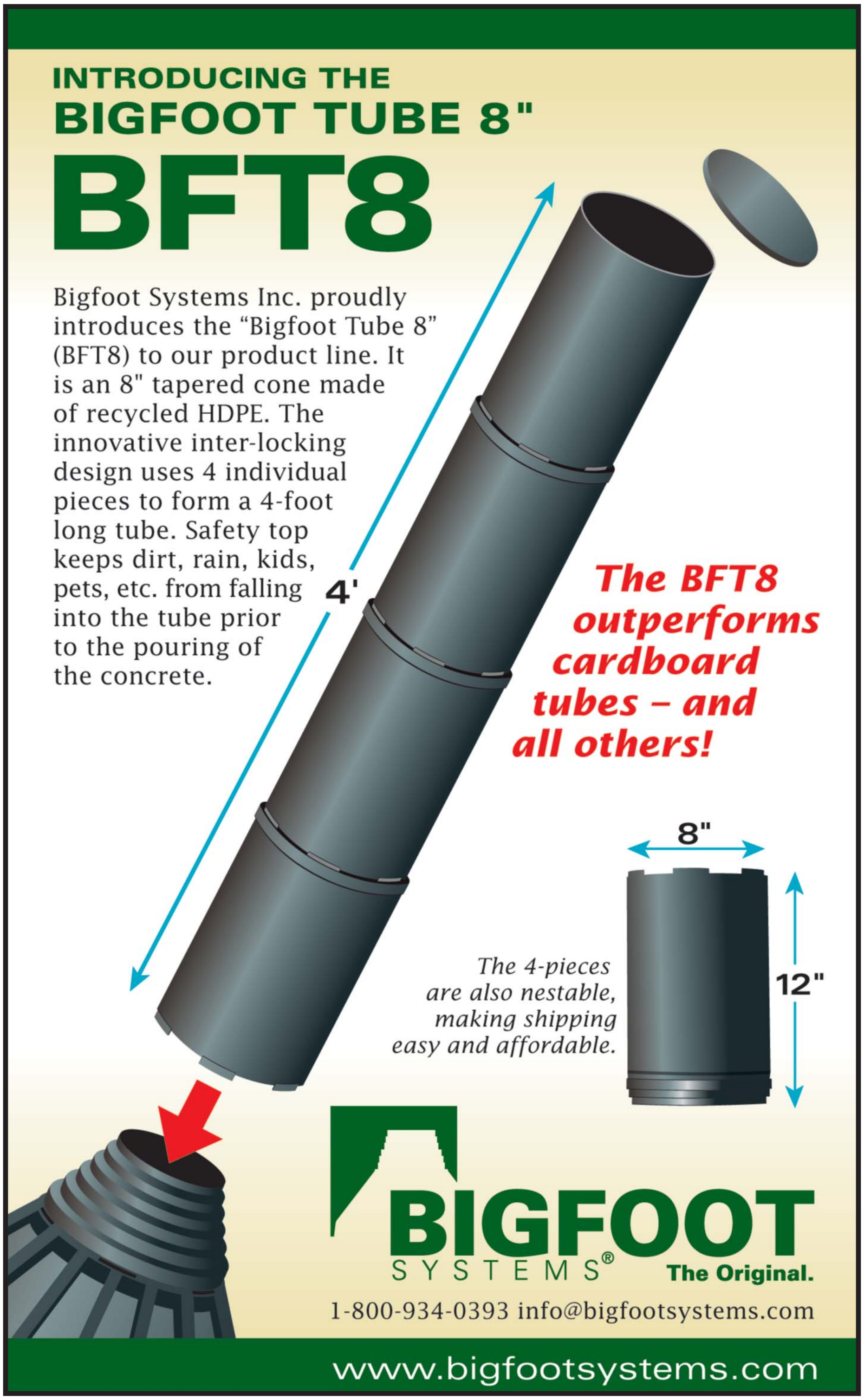


He measured, cut and attached a block to the vertical framing piece, which would make up one side of the cabinet opening. He then angled the framing pieces into the opening and knocked the vertical piece into position. He used screws to fasten the new framing boards.

Once all the framing was in place, Davis used his Milwaukee Sawzall to cut the dining room drywall from the backside. When



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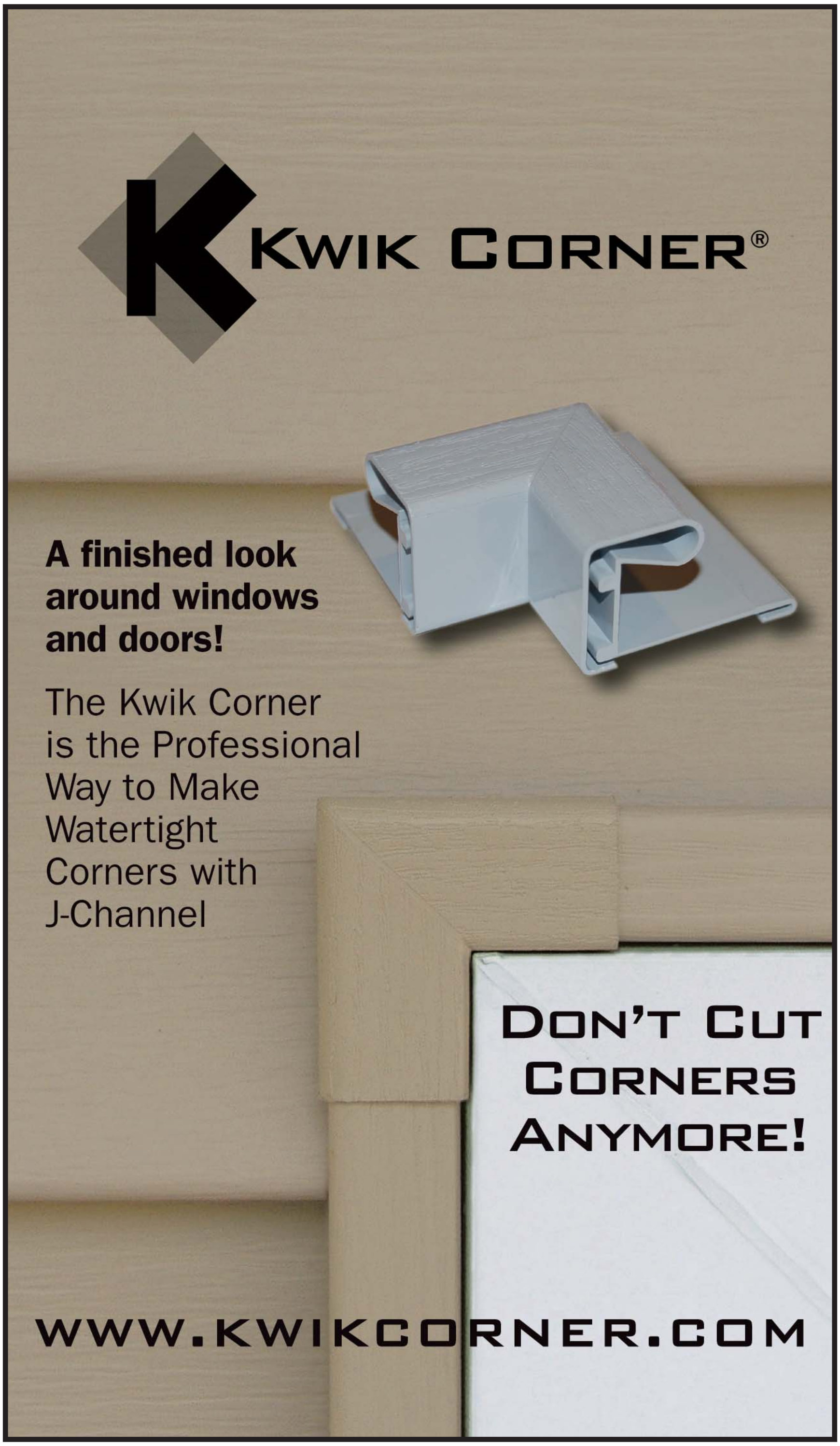
viewing the drywall cut from the dining room side, you can see the sawzall blade caused no damage to the heavily textured wall paper. When he removed the drywall from the dining room side of the wall, you could see that most of the mess was on the inside of the closet.

Electrician Rocky Thornton came by to inspect the wiring and make all of the final connections.

The guys from the cabinet shop showed up right on schedule. Experienced cabinet installers like Davis can usually talk the cabinet makers into delivering the cabinets not only to the house but right to the install location inside the house.



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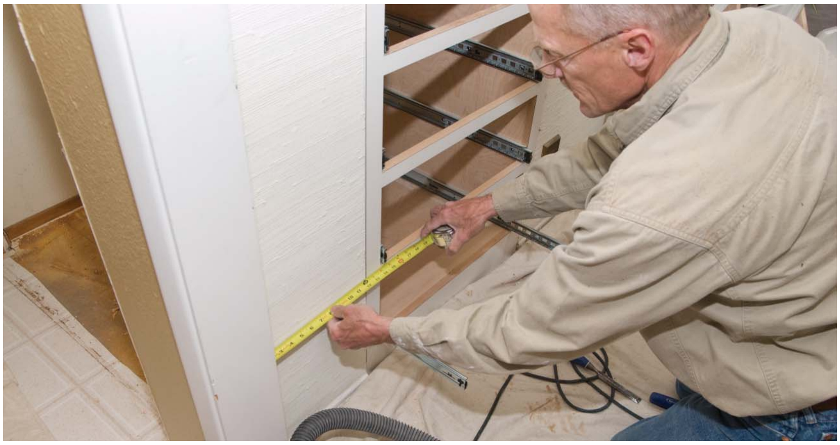
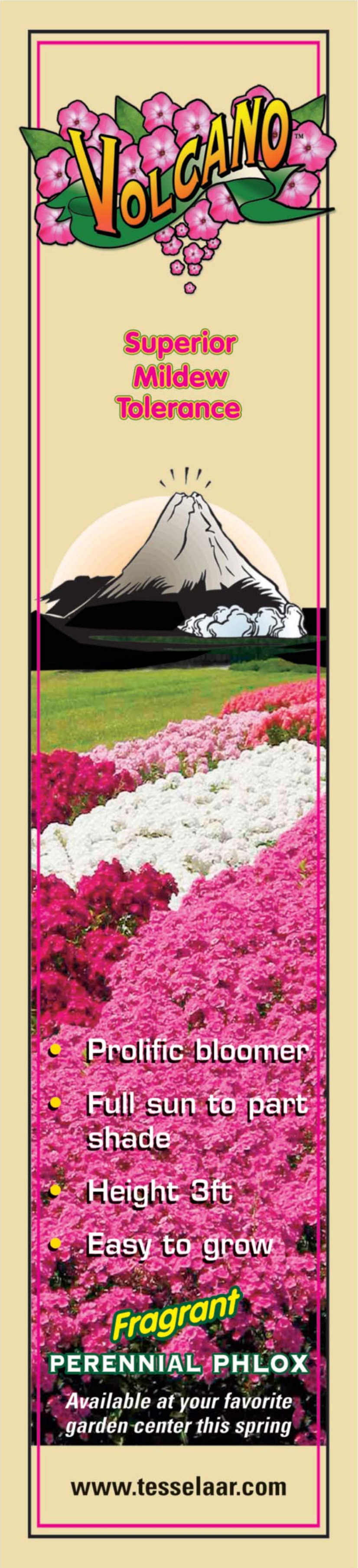


With the dining room cabinet in the opening, Davis checked the distance from the corner at both the bottom and the top of the cabinet. He anchored the cabinet to the framing with a drywall screw.

Davis filled the gaps between the cabinet and the framing with cedar shims where he wanted to use screws. He then cut off the shims so they were flush or a little inside the opening.

He made marks 1/2 inch from the outside at several points along the face frame to indicate where the inside edge of the casing should be. With a piece of casing held in line with the reveal marks, Davis marked the base board along the outside of the casing. He then cut the base, being careful not to damage the flooring or the wall surface outside the casing area.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Davis used his Makita power planer to plane down a piece of trim stock to use as base shoe along the front of the kitchen cabinet at the floor. A little experimentation and a lot of experience helped find the right angle to match the base shoe to the trim. After checking the base shoe for length, he nailed it into position with an 18-gauge finish nailer.

Davis measured the header piece for the cabinets at the short point of the miters. After making a 45-degree cut on the right end, he lined the short point of the miter with the edge of his tailgate liner, which provided a good hooking point for his tape so he could mark the short point for the left end miter. He

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nailed the casing to the cabinet face frames with 18-gauge finish nails and then through the casing and drywall into the framing on the thick edge of the casing with 16-gauge finish nails.

The kitchen cabinet features roll-out recycle bins and a trash can, which can be moved to allow access into the storage area behind the cabinet.

The finished project features built-in cabinets in two rooms that occupy space in one closet. **EHT**

THE RIGHT ANGLE

One of the coolest tools Davis used for this install was Milwaukee's Right Angle Attachment, which allows users to drill holes and drive screws in tight spots. The attachment can be used for corded and cordless drills and uses standard 1/4-inch hex accessories. The rugged ball bearing, metal housing and steel gear construction equips this adapter to handle up to 235 inch-pounds of torque.

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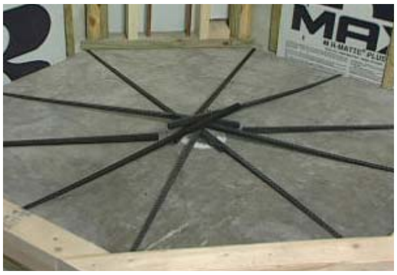
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BUILDERS' SHOW

A Roundup of Tools and Materials shown in Orlando

Trade shows don't get much bigger than the annual International Builders' Show. More than 92,000 building industry professionals from around the globe convened at the Orange County Convention Center, February 13-16 in Orlando, Florida. With over 1,900 exhibitors covering more than one million square feet of exhibit space, attendees packed the aisles to see the latest in building materials, tools and technologies. Here's look at some of the latest and greatest innovations that caught our eye.

GOOF PROOF SHOWERS

Mark E Industries exhibited a system to help shower installers achieve the right pitch in tiled shower floors. The first product to be installed is called Pre-Pitch, which has plastic arms extending outward from the drain center in a spider-like fashion. The arms are basically used as float guides to create a proper subfloor pitch beneath the pan liner to direct water flow to the weep holes of the shower drain. The second product, Quick Pitch, employs a similar drain above the liner to provide the 1/4-inch-per-foot fall requirement for proper drainage. Also available is Kirb-Perfect, which is a form for creating shower curbs, and StringA-Level, a flexible level for designing shower walls. Check out www.markeindustries.com or call 1-866-771-9470.



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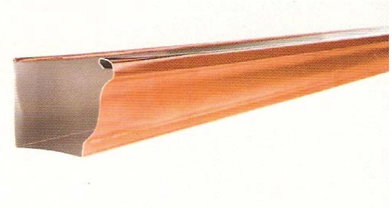

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Forbo launched a new flooring system called Marmoleum Click, which is a natural linoleum product made primarily from linseed oil, wood flour and pine rosins. The flooring easily clicks into place with tongue-and-groove panels and squares, and no glue is required, so the floor can be walked on immediately after installation. The linoleum surface is manufactured over water-resistant, high-density fiberboard with a cork layer backing for its acoustic properties. The Marmoleum surface is durable, anti-bacterial and easy to clean. Create your own custom flooring design by mixing and matching the 18 available colors with the 12-by-36-inch panels and 12-by-12-inch squares. To learn more, visit www.themarmoleumstore.com or call 1-866-MARMOLEUM.

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The TopStar is a no-hassle way to make fine adjustments when installing window and door frames, cabinets and more. This two-piece screw for GRK fasteners is actually a tool that replaces conventional wood shims, perfectly suited for both professionals and DIY'ers. Available in 2-1/2 to 16 inches, the fastener works by first predrilling the jamb, then driving it through the hole and into the rough opening with a special crown bit, so the head is flush with the jamb surface. To adjust the door frame, remove the crown bit and insert a driver bit into the recessed screw head of the TopStar. Fine adjustments can then be made in either direction until plumb. Learn more at www.grkfasteners.com or call 1-800-263-0463.

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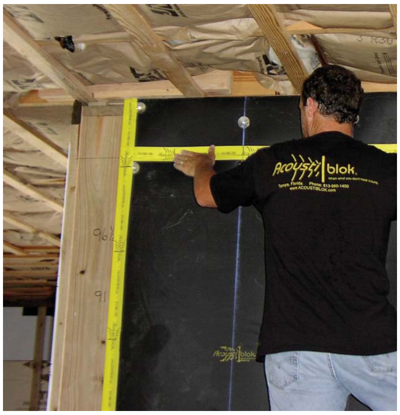

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THE BUILDERS' SHOW

THE COPING FOOT

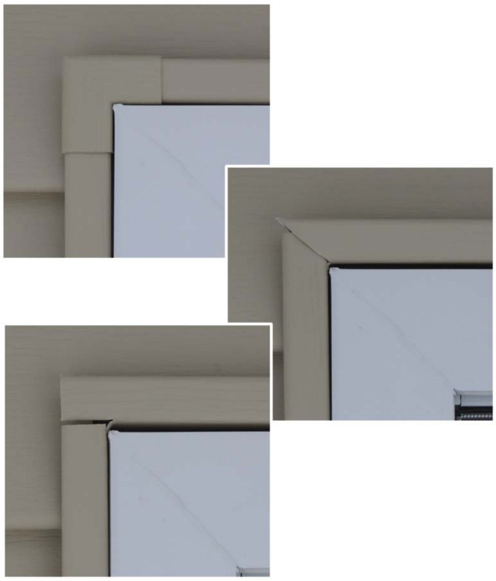
The *EHT* staff is no stranger to trim carpentry, and a coped joint is our preferred method of joining inside corners in moulding. To that end, Collins Tool Company has developed the Coping Foot. This jigsaw accessory is a curved footplate that replaces your saw's standard flat plate. This means you're not fighting against the flat surface of the standard footplate no matter which direction you tilt the saw. The curved plate provides a single contact point as you maneuver the jigsaw along the profile of a piece of moulding. Using the Coping Foot takes a little practice, and the moulding should be clamped securely so you can use both hands on the saw. But once you get the feel of the tool, you can quickly notch out the stock and trim up the profile with a file. This attachment proves to be a real time-saving alternative to a manual coping saw. For more, visit www.collinstool.com or call 1-888-838-8988.

GEM-LOC PREMIER EDGE

With your next laminate countertop installation, say goodbye to bevels and hello to a new edge decor from LOTI Corporation. Gem-Loc Premier Edge is a new countertop edge treatment that combines laminate with the beauty of solid surface materials to create a smooth radius edge. Available are new patterns and textures that rival expensive high-end materials, and at a fraction of the cost. The dual material also affords endless color combinations for a customized kitchen. Plus, the curved front edge of the countertop, which receives the heaviest wear on the counter, spreads the wear over a larger surface area, minimizing the damage. Gem-Loc Premier Edge is available in a wide variety of styles, including tongue-and-groove, flat-back and a backsplash cap. Visit www.gemloc.com or call 1-877-GEM-EDGE.

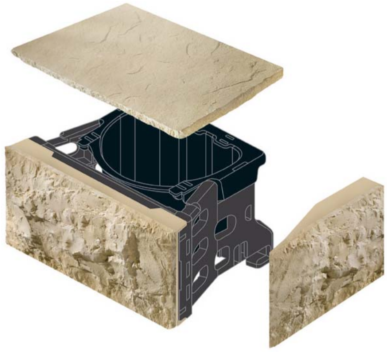
KWIK CORNER

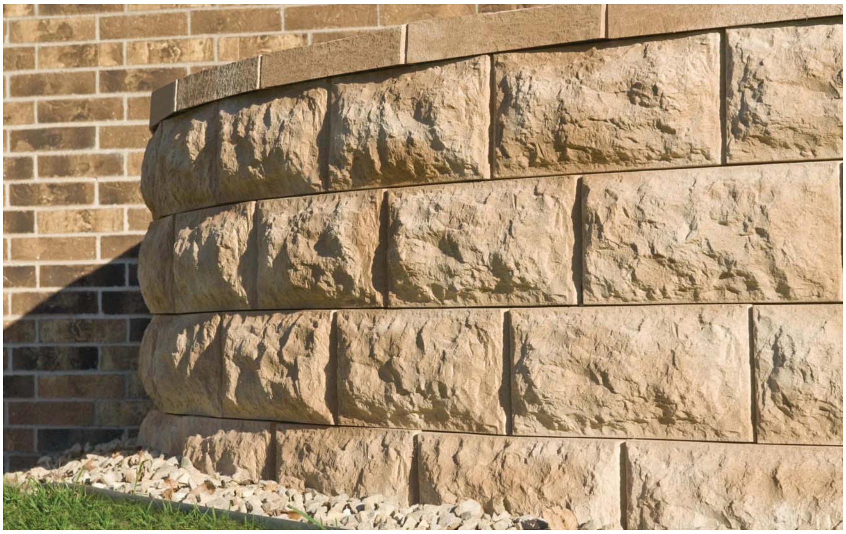
Traditionally, vinyl siding contractors have cut and bent tabs or mitered corners when installing doors and windows. With RLC Technologies' new Kwik Corner product, simply measure the height and width of the window, cut the J-channel to those lengths (minus 1/8 inch), and plug the J-channel into the Kwik Corner. Then install the frame around the window and door, and nail it in place. Along with diverting water and saving installation time, it provides a finished look around the J-channel, concealing unsightly gaps and cracks. For more information, go to www.kwikcorner.com or call 1-866-781-KWIK.



MILLENIA WALL SOLUTION

Stacking stones is the most time-honored method of erecting a retaining wall, but stone is also the most costly building material for walls and requires skill and a strong back. Segmental retaining wall systems made of concrete blocks present a sturdy alternative, but weight is still a serious issue. In response, Millenia Wall Solutions offers the patented Mass Confinement Cell Technology to replace concrete blocks. With a convincing faux stone appearance, these lightweight retaining wall units consist of a "confinement cell" secured to a rigid frame. The units lock together in all directions to form solid integral walls with straight lines and consistent spacing. The Millenia blocks are manufactured using recycled polymeric resin and weigh only 5 pounds per square foot (compared to 60 to 100 pounds for concrete blocks). Weight is achieved by adding gravel or crushed rock into the hollow cores of the units. The cross ribbing of the frames adds strength and rigidity to the system, and the beveled edges of the blocks make it easy to create smoothly curved walls. Learn more at www.milleniawalls.com or call 1-866-549-WALLS.





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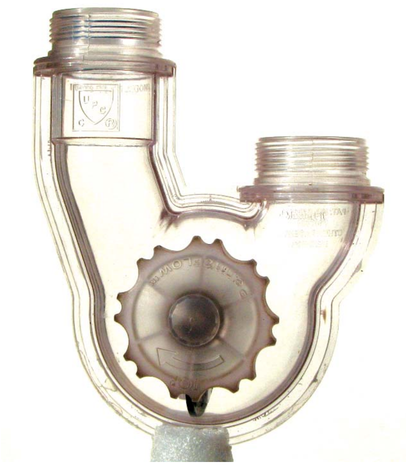
INVISI-FAST HIDDEN DECK FASTENERS

A smart spin on hidden deck fasteners comes from Invisi-Fast, which offers a selection of three fasteners. First, the company's standard UV-resistant fastener functions as both a hidden fastener and a deck-board spacer. Second, the Plus fastening accessory is used in conjunction with standard Invisi-Fast fasteners to offer an above-the-deck fastening option for low-to-the-ground or high-level decks. But our staff was most impressed by the clever design of the Invisi-Fast Angle fastener. It attaches beneath the deck boards and joists for a hidden appearance, but the spacer that extends above the joist and between the deck boards has a round shape. This round spacer allows you to angle the deck boards against it. So, if you want to build a deck with the boards laid diagonally over the joists, the Invisi-Fast Angle fastener will keep all screws hidden while also keeping the angled deck boards gapped accurately. Check out www.invisifast.com or call 1-866-766-9427.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BUILDERS' SHOW



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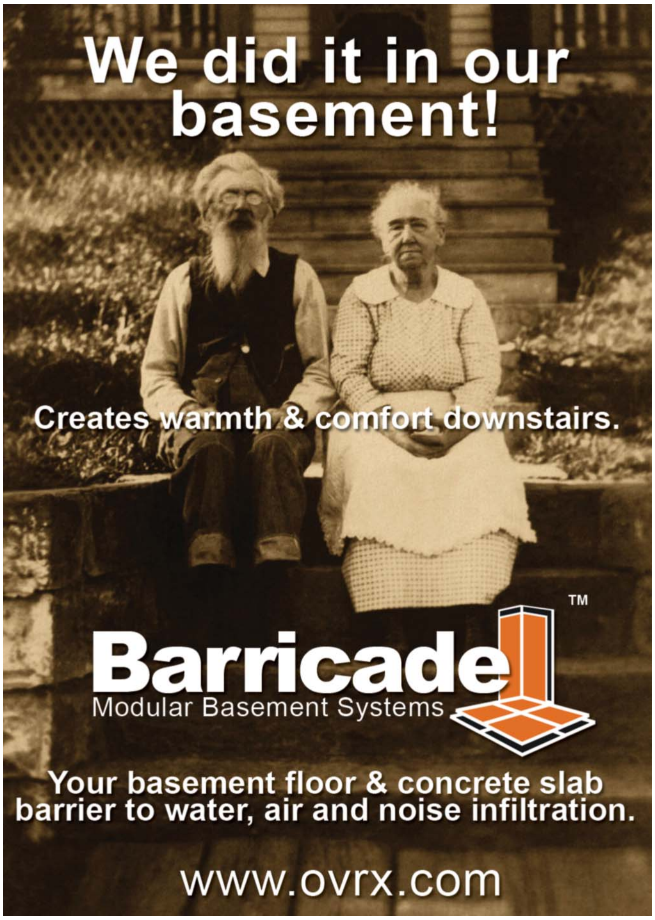
PermaFlow is a multi-functional plumbing fixture that installs like a conventional P-trap beneath sinks and lavatories. The fixture's unique design continually moves sediment downstream, which minimizes stagnant residue to prevent drain clogs. The PermaFlow piping is also clear, so you can easily see and diagnose potential plumbing problems. And if there is an obstruction in the trap, simply turn the outside dial clockwise to rotate the internal wiper to the "9 o'clock" position, lifting debris into the water stream to continue down the drain. Use this same rotating action to hold a dropped article—like a diamond ring—in place while you lower a wire hook from the sink to retrieve it. PermaFlow provides a low-maintenance solution to troubleshoot the home's plumbing system. Visit www.pfwaterworks.com or call 1-877-265-9777.

LITESTEEL BEAMS

LiteSteel Beam (LSB) from LiteSteel technologies is a lightweight structural beam with the strength of steel but with the easy workability of wood products. Compared to hot-rolled structural steel or engineered wood beams, LSB can save time and labor. The LSB beams can be carried like wood beams and can be cut, nailed, screwed and drilled on the worksite using standard tools. Visit www.litesteelbeam.com or call 1-877-285-2607. **EHT**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BUILD A SQUEAK-FREE FLOOR

By Chris Brandt, P.E.

Kitchen interior photo © Stephen Coburn. All other photos in this article appear courtesy Weyerhaueser.

A Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts: View the Floor Framing as a Total System

If you are planning an addition to your home, or are going all the way and building a new home, a key area to focus on is the structural framing of the floors. Too often, floors have annoying squeaks or bounce, which can mar an otherwise quality job on the rest of the project. But a correctly built floor is a hallmark of good construction and can help support the long-term value and enjoyment of your home. Paying careful attention to the framing will help provide a solid and silent floor, plus reduce the risk of cracks in tiles, or gaps and bulges that show through carpet, linoleum or other floor coverings.

Quality builders will tell you that viewing the overall structural frame as a system, instead of individual components, helps deliver a stronger built home; this goes the same for your floors. Selecting and installing joists, rim board and floor panels that perform as a cohesive unit provides superior quality over installing with a piecemeal approach. Think of a finely tuned engine: All of the parts must fit together precisely and work as one for optimum performance. And, using modern materials, such as engineered wood products, can help speed construction and improve overall quality.

PLAN AHEAD

The first step in creating a superior floor is working out the

details in advance. This is critical because it can be difficult and expensive to try to retrofit a poor floor installation.

Fortunately, you don't need to be a contractor or architect to develop a well-thought and workable plan for the floors. Many lumber and building material dealers—especially those who support professional builders—have the tools and resources to help turn your basic ideas into a detailed plan. They can show you the size, spacing, and span for all materials, and then provide a detailed list to help you get the right supplies. As with any construction project, you should check with your local building department to ensure compliance with codes and to confirm if an engineer of record will need to review and stamp the plans.

The traditional approach to designing a floor is based on live load deflection criteria (i.e., how much the floor "bends" when the room is furnished and occupied), but deflection is only one part of how a floor performs. Relying on this method may provide a structurally sound floor that meets codes, but falls short of your expectations if it bounces, feels soft, or vibrates when you walk on it.

To address this shortcoming, an action many professional builders take—one that is also open to the serious do-it-yourselfer—is to have the dealer provide a prediction of the floor's performance. For example, using TJ-Pro™ Ratings developed by iLevel by Weyerhaeuser, the dealer can evaluate factors such as materials and installation methods, and determine a target

Work with your lumber dealer to develop a floor plan.

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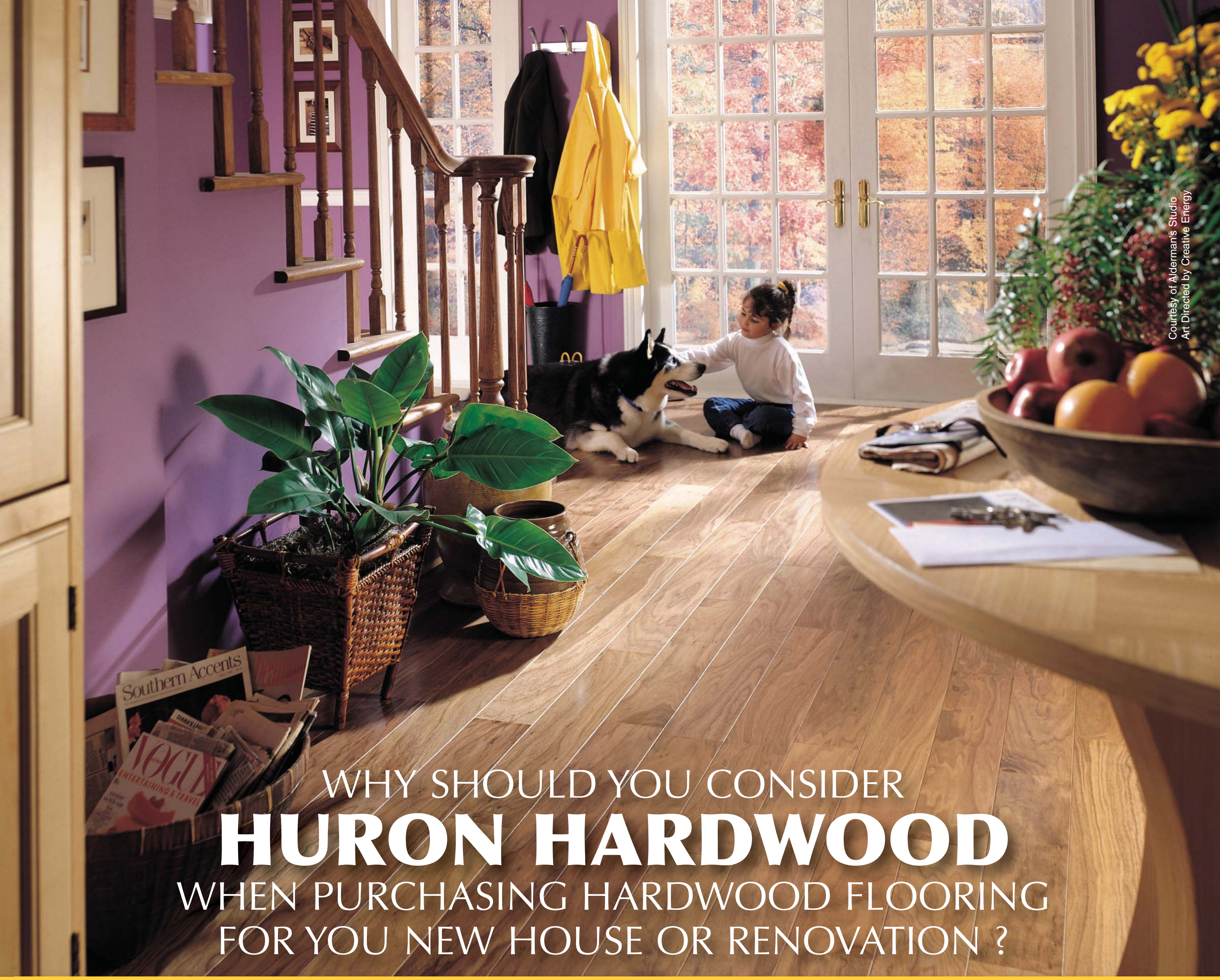

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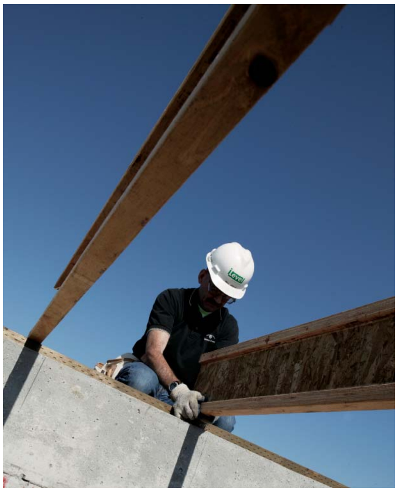
performance rating for your floor based on your own expectations. Such ratings provide you with an idea of how the floor will feel, and allow you to test and compare the performance of various construction plans before installation. This can also help ensure that the finished floor is not over built or under built, and it balances desired performance with your project budget.

Obtaining performance ratings is quick and straightforward. You'll need to provide the dealer with the dimensions of the floor, the type of floor covering (carpet, tile, hardwood, etc.), and the anticipated use of the room. Considering the use can help you decide how solid you want the floor to be. For example, a high TJ-Pro Rating may be especially important in a room with a lot of traffic like a living room or kitchen, but less important in a spare bedroom or office.

JOISTS

Once you've worked out a framing plan with the building material dealer, there are a number of things you can do during installation to help ensure the floor works as a system. From your work with the dealer, you will have selected either solid-sawn lumber joists (typically 2-by-10s or 2-by-12s) or engineered wood I-joists, such as TJI® joists.



I-joists feature a top and bottom flange for exceptional strength with less material.

I-joists are typically manufactured with an engineered wood product top and bottom flange (in the case of TJI joists, Microllam® laminated veneer lumber—LVL) and an oriented strand board (OSB) web between the flanges. The engineered materials provide exceptional dimensional stability,

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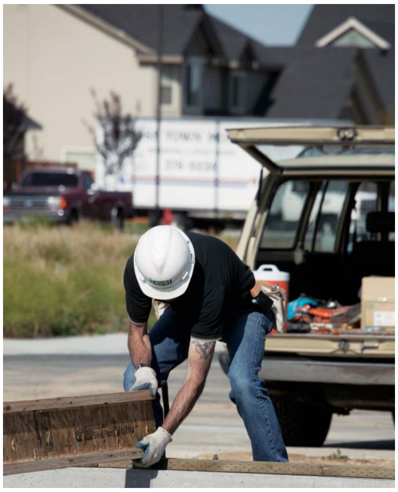


I-joists come in long lengths, allowing them to span greater distances than standard joists.

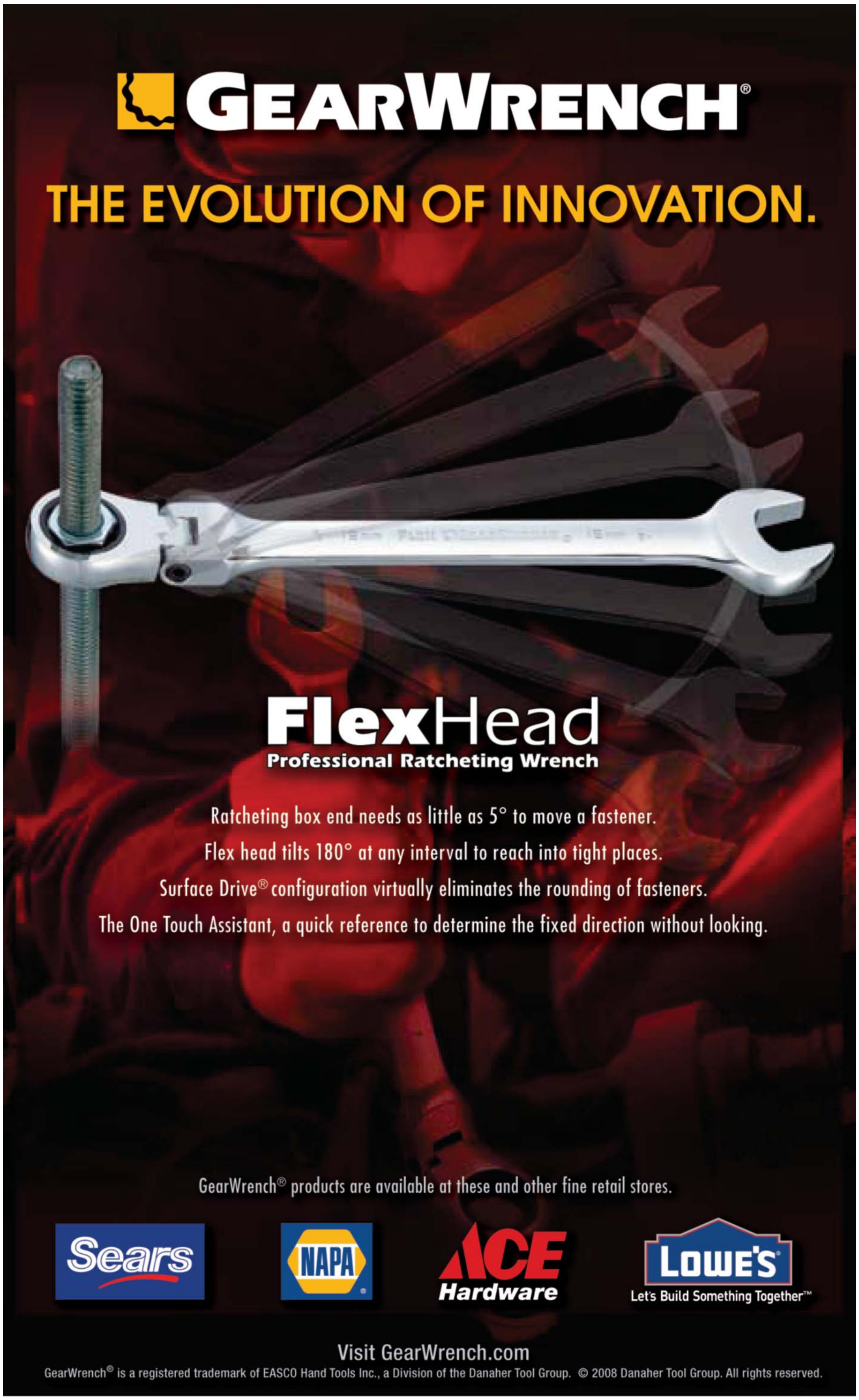
which helps I-joists resist warping, twisting and shrinking. The "I" shape is also structurally efficient and can do more work while using less material than would otherwise be possible with a typical rectangular joist. I-joists come in long lengths, allowing them to span greater distances and create open floor plans with fewer intervening walls or columns.

In addition to their strength and consistency, many builders like to use I-joists because they are easy to work with. They are relatively lightweight and simple to handle, plus they can be cut and installed using standard construction tools. Some brands also have pre-cut knockout holes to eliminate guesswork and extra effort when routing small pipes and wiring. If needed, extra holes can be drilled, but be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines to not compromise the structural integrity of the joist. And unlike conventional joists for which the position of the crown must be noted, I-joists do not have an upside or a downside and can be installed with either flange up.

Because they are stable and consistent, I-joists work very well in a system approach to a stable floor. When installing them, remember the following points to further reduce the potential for squeaks and bounce:

First, avoid spanning the maximum distance allowed by the type and size of joist you are using. While this is not a structural integrity issue, a joist at or near its maximum span is often more susceptible to annoying vibrations. Span and spacing, as well as size of joist to achieve your desired TJ-Pro Rating, will have been determined in advance during the discussion with your dealer.

Second, follow the manufactur-



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er's specifications for fastening the I-joists at supports. This will help ensure the flanges are not damaged and will reduce the potential for nails squeaking when you walk on the floor. I-joists are typically attached to beams or headers using metal hangers. Place a dab of adhesive in the seat of the hanger to help eliminate squeaks from the joist rubbing on the hanger. Be sure to nail the hanger in all required holes as specified by the manufacturer and bend the tabs over (on select hangers) followed by nailing them down.

I-joists are typically attached to beams or headers using metal hangers.

Third, if you need to use one of the pre-cut knockout holes or drill a hole, follow the manufacturer's hole chart and size the hole larger than the pipe or conduit passing through it. This will help eliminate noise from the joist rubbing against the pipe when someone walks over the floor.

Finally, while not related to floor noise, do not cut or notch the flanges of I-joists. The flanges are designed to be a continuous unit and cuts can reduce their load bearing capacity, potentially resulting in breakage or loss of structural integrity.

If you are working with sawn lumber joists instead of engineered I-joists, many of the suggestions in the following sections on rim board and sheathing will help reduce the potential for squeaks. In addition, some manufacturers offer higher-grade joists that are selected for

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increased performance. For example, iLevel Premium Joists are mechanically tested and visually graded for consistency and stability, reducing the need to cull through stacks of lumber or trim and adjust for end defects. Such sawn lumber joists can provide a lower cost alternative to engineered I-joists in cases where the highest levels of performance are not required.

Oriented strand board (OSB) is the preferred material for subfloor panels because it is less susceptible to buckling and delamination, and typically does not have the knots and voids found in plywood.

RIM BOARD

Rim board is a key component in the overall floor framing system. It provides a stable attachment point for the joists and assists with vertical and lateral load transfer, including transferring loads from the walls through to the foundation. Rim board also provides a secure attachment point for decks.

As with joists, there are both sawn lumber and engineered wood product options available for rim board. The key factor in selecting rim board is to match it to the material used for the joists. In other words, do not mix I-joists with sawn lumber rim board or sawn joists with engineered wood product rim board. To help avoid this, manufacturers typically make I-joists in different sizes from sawn lumber so they don't appear to be compatible with one another. Matching materials is important

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and eliminates differences in shrinkage and inconsistencies between materials. I-joists typically do not shrink, while sawn lumber can shrink, potentially resulting in gaps that can lead to a noisy floor.

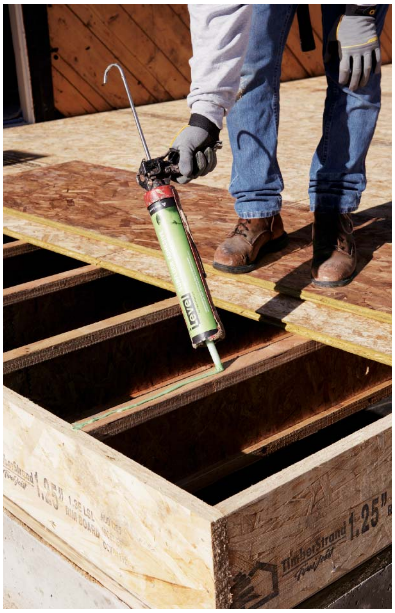
An engineered wood product frequently used for rim board is laminated strand lumber (LSL), such as TimberStrand® LSL. The material is made from wood strands that are dried and bound with resin. During manufacturing, the alignment of the strands is carefully controlled to take advantage of the wood's natural strength. The result is rim board that is consistently straight, true and dimensionally stable—key properties for load transfer. LSL also has the added benefit of holding fasteners very well, which can help eliminate squeaks.

No special tools are required to work with LSL and regardless of whether you use it or sawn lumber rim board, be sure to follow code requirements for connections to the rest of the structure. A key consideration with either type of rim board is to plan ahead so that joints fall between joists. When a rim board joint occurs at a joist, the tendency is to nail both pieces of rim board to the joist, which could result in damage to the joist, as well as increase the potential for squeaks.

FLOOR PANELS

Typical subfloor panels are either plywood or oriented strand board (OSB). OSB is an engineered wood product manufactured from layers (or mats) of thin, approximately rectangular, strands of wood compressed and bonded together with durable adhesives. A typical OSB panel is comprised of four mats, with the wood strands cross-oriented from layer to layer for strength. To achieve the flattest and most stable floors, OSB is the preferred choice since it is less susceptible to buckling and delamination and typically does not have the knots and voids often found in plywood.

A typical OSB panel thickness used in floors is 23/32 inch, but thicker 1-1/8-inch panels help dampen vibration and provide a more solid base with less deflection for hardwood floors and ceramic tiles, which can help reduce tile cracks caused by sheathing deformation between joists.



Apply adhesive to all contact points between the panels and framing members.

As with most classes of building products, different qualities of OSB floor sheathing are available, which can contribute to the performance of the finished floor. Products are available that are formulated to limit edge swell caused by rain or moisture, and also eliminate the need for extra sanding and adjustments to

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For a tight connection, stand on the panels to press them downward when fastening.

ensure a smooth and even surface. For example, Structurwood Edge Gold® floor panels offer enhanced moisture resistance and a 90-day no-sand guarantee.

OSB panels install with the same ease as plywood, and in cases of panels with a tongue and groove, the process is even simpler since the panels are self-gapping. The following are tips for working with floor panels to help ensure they perform in conjunction with the other components of the floor framing.

In addition to nailing the panels to the joists and rim board, apply adhesive at all contact points between panels and other framing members. The adhesive helps ensure that all floor components work together as a system and fills gaps to reduce squeaks and nail pops. Use a construction adhesive that meets ASTM D 3498 (AFG-01) requirements. Check the label, or if you are unsure, ask your dealer for recommended products.

Apply a 1/4-inch diameter or larger bead of adhesive along the top of the joist. Where panel edges join, use two beads to ensure proper adhesion of both panels. If working with tongue and groove panels, add a 1/8-inch diameter bead of adhesive in the groove. While not required, this helps eliminate slip at the panel joints, which reduces vibration and noise in the finished floor. For panels without tongue and groove, leave a 1/8-inch gap between panel edges to allow room for expansion and contraction. Floor panels with a tongue and groove need the 1/8-inch gap at the panel

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ends. Otherwise, you run the risk of panels buckling and creating uneven surfaces or ridges in the finished floor.

For the strongest bond, once adhesive is applied to the tops of joists and rim board, do not slide the panel across them, smearing the adhesive. Instead, position the panel against the already installed panels at a slight angle, and then set it into place. Fasten the entire panel before moving on to the next one, rather than tacking the corners only.

Pay close attention to nail location when attaching the floor panels. Nails that narrowly miss the joist (called "shiners") will rub against it when someone walks over the floor, causing a squeak. Snap chalk lines on the floor panels before fastening them to ensure that all nails

Tongue-and-groove panels are self-gapping. If using non-grooved panels, leave 1/8" gap between the edges to allow for expansion.

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go into the joist. Complete the fastening within 10-minutes of applying adhesive, or sooner if required by the adhesive manufacturer's recommendations. Follow the panel manufacturer's specifications for nailing pattern and size of nails. Where possible, inspect the framing from below once all panels are installed and remove and replace any shiners.

Building a high-quality floor goes beyond the skills of the casual do-it-yourselfer, but for those with some carpentry experience, planning ahead and using a few relatively simple techniques will help ensure the construction of a floor you will be proud to walk across for many years to come. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Chris Brandt is a market support engineer for iLevel by Weyerhaeuser. www.iLevel.com, 1-888-453-8358.

I-JOIST SAFETY AND HANDLING

Wood I-joists are strong and stable once fully installed. When building with them, there are several critical safety precautions to keep in mind to avoid serious injury to yourself or others working on your project, and to ensure high performance once installed:

When stood on their flanges in the installed position, I-joists are unstable until they are laterally braced. Walking on them beforehand can cause them to tip over, resulting in a falling hazard. Lateral bracing includes blocking, hangers, rim board, sheathing, rim joists and strut lines. Most manufacturers provide installation literature showing how to safely install and brace their products.

Do not walk on I-joists or use them as ramps when they are laying flat. They are designed to be strong when the flanges are oriented up and down in the classic "I" shape, but can potentially bend or break when loads are placed on them in the flat position.

Once installed, do not stack or store building materials on I-joists before the sheathing is attached. The sheathing and joists work together to provide the stability necessary for vertical loads.

Keep all wood products protected from the elements prior to and during construction to maintain their structural integrity.

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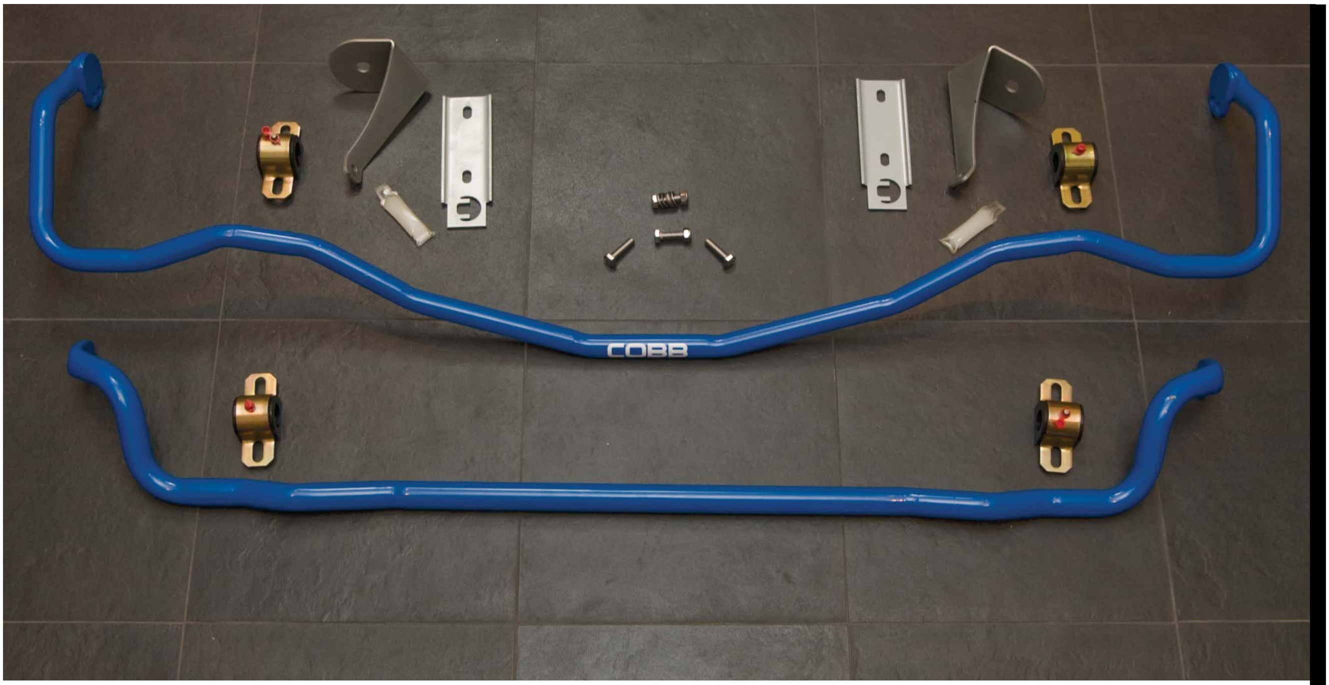
Anti-Sway Bar Install

Improve Traction with New Stabilizer Bars



By Tim Walton

When my friend Michael opted to buy the more luxury oriented 2005 Legacy GT Limited rather than the sportier Impreza STI, he lost out on some of the crisp suspension that comes on the rally inspired model. That's why he contacted Cobb Tuning.

Cobb Tuning has specialized in Subaru Performance parts and tuning since before Subaru even brought over its Turbocharged Impreza WRX model from Japan. With years of experience fine-tuning the required upgrades to reduce body roll and decrease understeer that plagues many factory cars, their tubular anti-sway bar kit not only enhances handling but also is lighter than its stock counterparts.

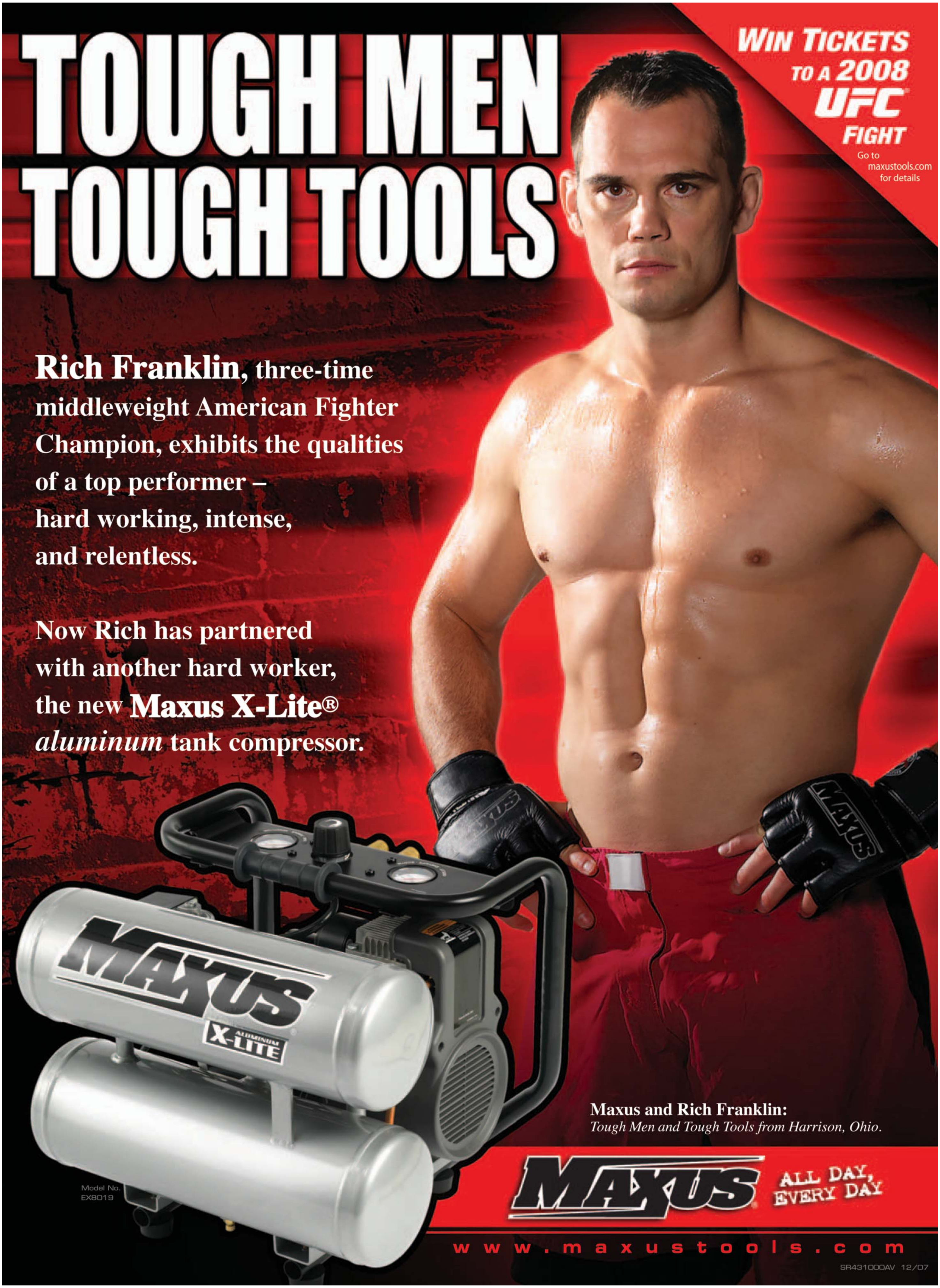
Stabilizer bars, anti-sway bars or anti-roll bars, no matter what they're called, serve to keep the car flatter in a corner to improve traction. Body roll is bad. It tends to load up the outside tires of a vehicle, reducing traction and messing up steering. The anti-sway bar makes the suspension less independent. Sharing the suspension load from the outside tires, the sway bar transfers weight to the inside tires, which means better traction. When the sway bar is too rigid it transfers bumps on the road from one side to the other. This negates too much of the independence of the suspension for both traction and comfort. So a well tuned bar tries to find a balance for "real world" road conditions.

Michael took an extended road trip right after the install, but his initial report indicated improved handling, flatter cornering and less push in the corners. And since he's putting on the miles across the Southwest, we're guessing he's glad it's in his modded Legacy.

Cobb's front and rear anti-sway bars come as a complete kit, including upgraded rear mounts, bushings, bushing straps with zerk fittings, other hardware and grease.

CONTACTS:

Cobb Tuning
www.cobbtuning.com



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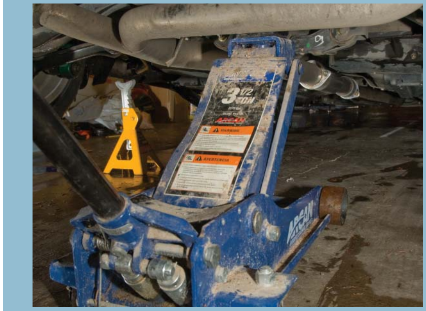
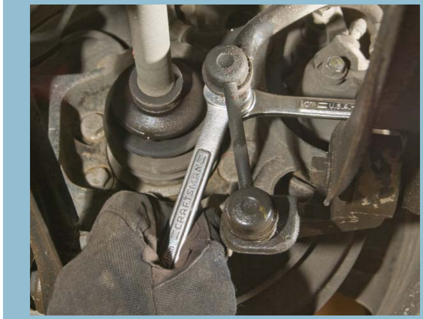
STEP-BY-STEP

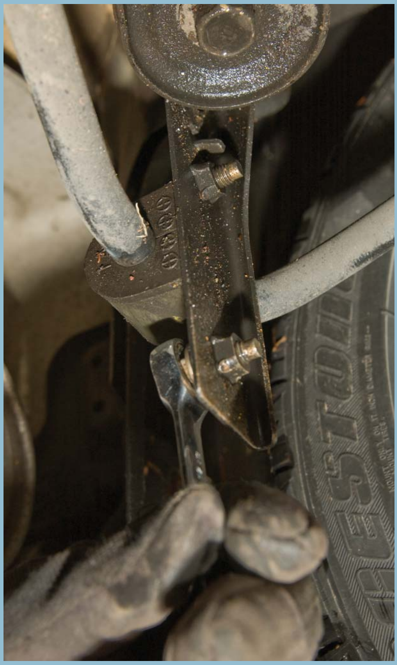


If you're not blessed with a shop equipped with a lift, you can use a floor jack and jack stands to support the vehicle (check your vehicle's owner's manual for proper locations).

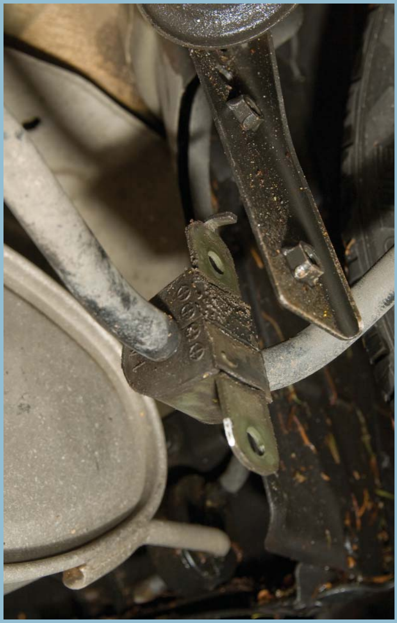


Tackling the rear bar first, we began by removing the rear sway bar endlinks. This takes two 14-millimeter wrenches—one to loosen the nut and the other in between the sway bay and endlink to keep the stud from spinning.

While you have the wrenches handy, remove the two bolts securing the driver's side muffler to the Y-pipe. Allow the muffler to swing up out of the way.



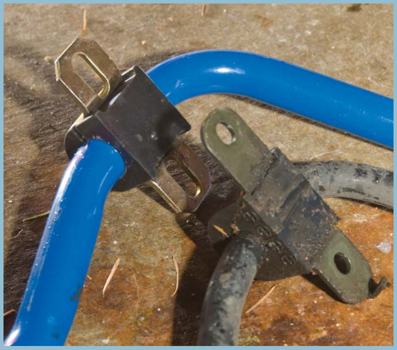
Using a 12-millimeter ratchet, remove the bolts holding the stock sway bar bushing straps (two on each side).



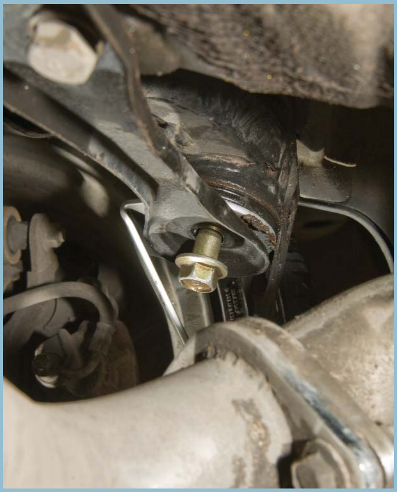
Note the orientation of the sway bar while removing the bushings. Keep track of the bushings so you can mimic their location on the new Cobb sway bar.

Snake the sway bar around the exhaust on the passenger side, taking advantage of the extra room on the driver's side you freed by moving the muffler earlier.

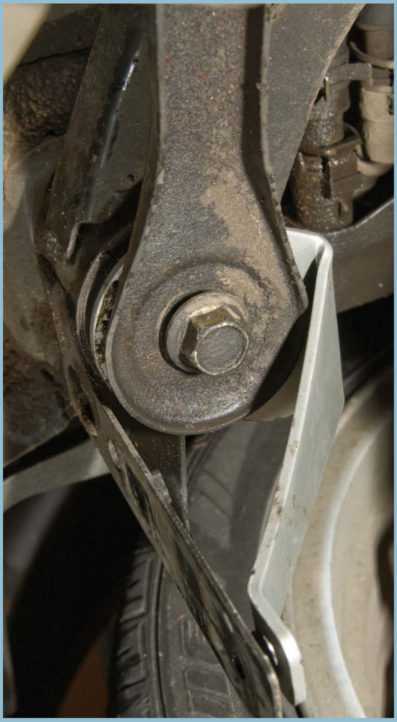
Liberally apply the supplied grease to lubricate the new, stiffer bushings (make sure to use the smaller 7/8-inch diameter bushings for the rear). Future lubrication using non-lithium grease can be applied using the zerk fittings.



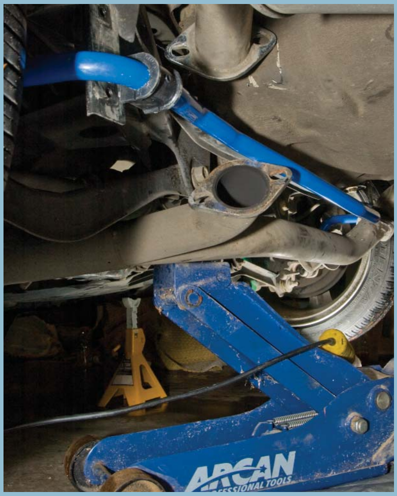
The tubular design of the Cobb anti-sway bars allows their larger aftermarket bars to still be lighter weight. Note the similarly placed bushings.



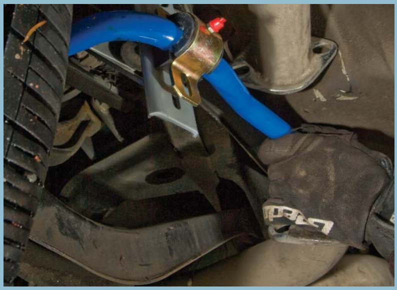
Supporting the rear differential housing, remove the 19-millimeter bolts from the sub-frame and slide the (left and right specific) Cobb reinforcement brackets between the sub-frame and chassis.



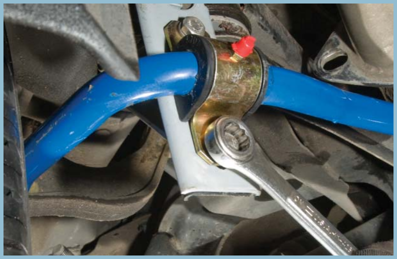
Leaving the 19-millimeter loose, the brackets should line up with the stock holes. The reinforced brackets help handle the extra forces the larger sway bar applies to the suspension.



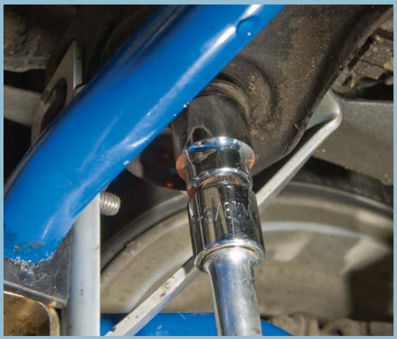
Slide the Cobb sway bar into position, keeping the angles needed with the stock sway bar in mind. The aftermarket cat-back exhaust system we installed earlier added a little extra challenge because of its extra tubing size.



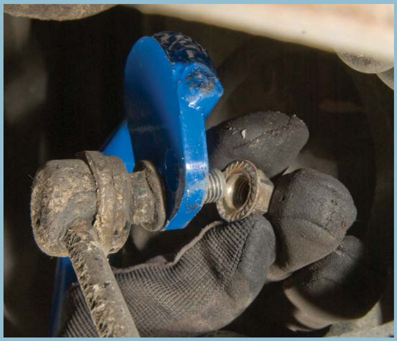
Install the other bracket with the concave side towards the rear, and move the sway bar bushing strap into alignment with the other holes.



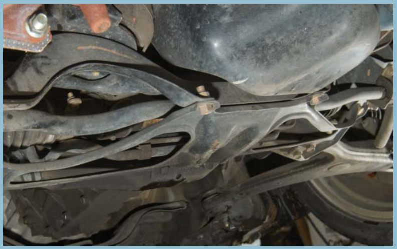
Using the provided bolts, washers and nuts, secure the bushing straps and torque the bolts and nuts to approximately 35 foot/pounds.



Torque the 19-millimeter sub-frame bolts to approximately 100 foot/pounds once the other brackets are aligned and tightened.

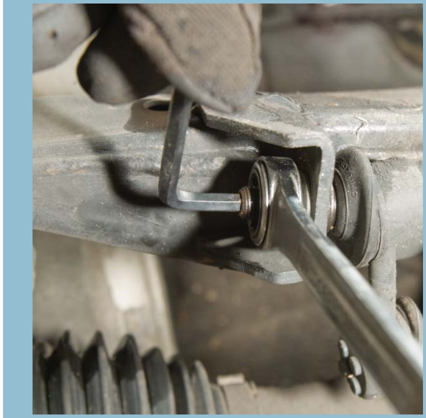


Reinstall the rear endlinks, noting that the hole closest to the tip is the softer setting (195 percent stiffer than the factory bar) and the other is the stiffer setting (215 percent stiffer). Cobb recommends the softer setting for most conditions.

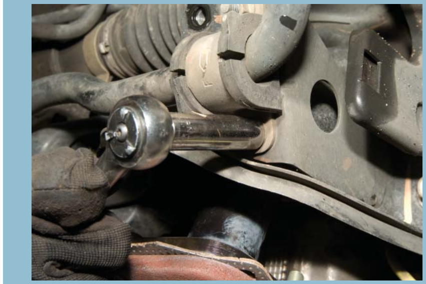


Moving to the front of the vehicle, the first angle of attack is to remove the sub-frame brace by removing the ten 14-millimeter bolts. Use a box wrench to prevent the two nuts above the sub-frame from spinning on the front of the brace.

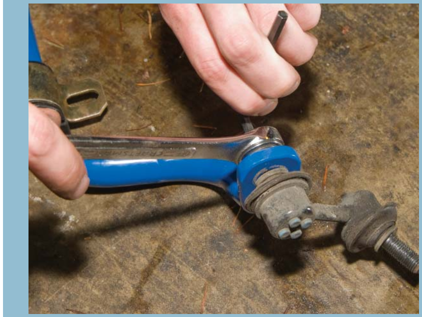
STEP-BY-STEP



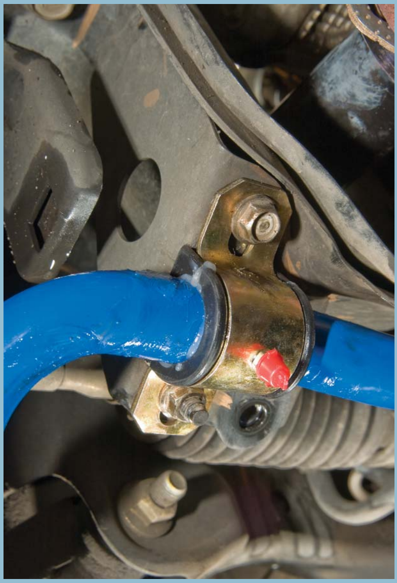
The front endlinks require a 14-millimeter wrench and a 5mm allen wrench for removal. The stud, which the 14mm nut is around, has an allen hole on the end to prevent it from free-spinning during removal.



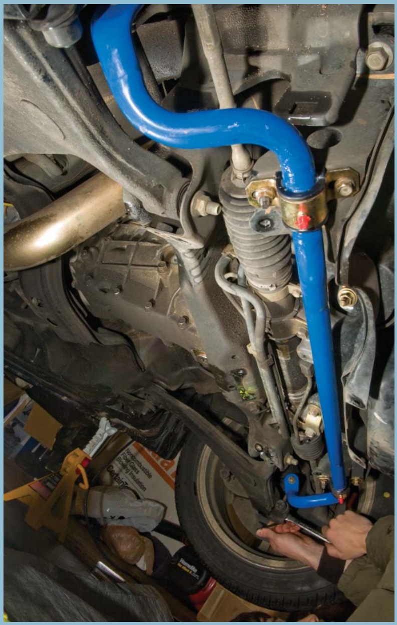
Remove the factory bushing straps. Be careful to support the sway bar to prevent it from falling, and note it's orientation below the tie-rod ends.



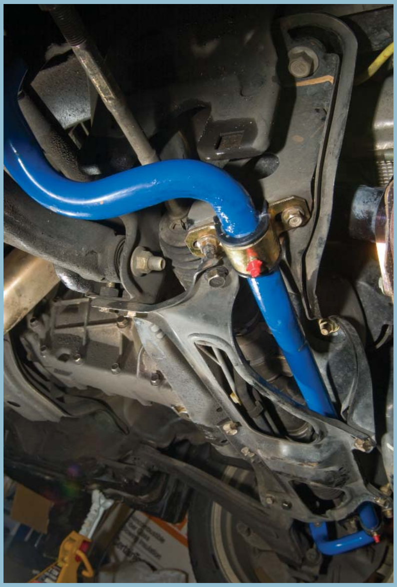
Using the wrench and allen combination again, install the endlinks to the Cobb sway bar. Grease and arrange the bushings and straps on the new bar.



Reusing the factory bolt and nut, install the sway bar, ensuring that it's rotated correctly and not installed upside down (the arches go under the steering tie-rod ends).



Reinstall the front endlinks. Torque to approximately 40 foot/pounds, and for extra insurance that the nuts will not loosen, apply Loctite to the stud threads before tightening.



Replace the sub-frame brace. Reinstall the bolts loosely, then torque them to about 55 foot/pounds once they are all threaded. **EHT**

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Concrobium Mold Control	9
Connecticut Screen Works	88
CreteSheet	13
DEFY Deck Stain	58
Dix Systems	23
Dumond	77
Earth-Way	30
EnergyBlock	81
EZ A Peel	25
Fypon	IFC,1
Gardner-Gibson	20
GearWrench	75
General Tools & Instruments	15
Gorilla Glue	53
Grizzly Industrial	33
GRK Fasteners	10
Huron Hardwood Floors	73
JNK Products, LLC	29
Knee Blades.com	80
Kwik Corner	56
Lafarge	4
Lam-Hammer	80
Little Beaver	31
Louisville Ladder	61
Lumber Liquidators	24,88
Mapei	2, 3
Maxus	83
Mayhew Tools	39
Muro	24
Oneida Air Systems	59
Outdoor Living Today	48
Ovrx	68
Painter's Pyramid	72
PexSupply.com	76
Premier	22
Pristine Blue	32
Red Devil	11
Rheem	7
Salter Industries	12
Schroeder Log Home Supply, Inc.	46
Sikkens	27
Southern Home Seminars	88
Striker Construction Pencil	24
SuperPages.com	69
TG Tools	44,45
The Coper	22
Tiger Foam Insulation	42
Timberlane	21
TimberTech	49
T-JAK	68
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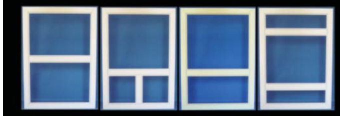

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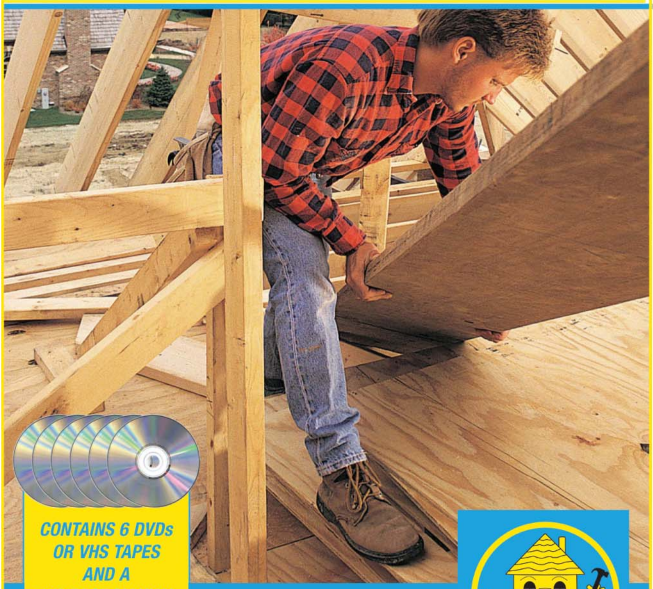

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